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The Use of Womens Grief for Political Purposes in America during World War I

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THE USE OF WOMEN'S GRIEF FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES IN AMERICA DURING WORLD WAR I

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Linda L. Morgan ENTITLED The Use of Women's Grief for Political Purposes in America during World War I BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

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The Use of Women's Grief for Political Purposes in America during World War I.

This study discusses a politically driven change in American women's public mourning customs over the fallen of World War I. During the war, government officials and politicians sought to transform women's grief over a fallen loved one into a celebration of an honorable military death. They actively discouraged the wearing of traditional black mourning and instead urged the wearing of a simple black armband with a gold star. This substituted glory for grief and thus made their loved one's death a mark of distinction by giving their life in the service of their country. The radical change in women's public mourning over a soldier's wartime death, initiated by the unlikely partnership of President Woodrow Wilson and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, demonstrates how two powerful political leaders used women's public grief to help expedite their own political agendas. This study also explores the political networking which resulted in the evolution of the gold star icon and the distinction between how women mourned a war related military death as opposed to a civilian death before and during the World War I period.

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I. INTRODUCTION

America entered World War I in April 1917. By this time, the major powers of Europe had already been embroiled in numerous grim battles since the war began in 1914. One five month conflict alone, the First Battle of Somme in 1916, claimed a combined casualty list of over one million European men. During the first sixteen months of the United States involvement in the war, the American Expeditionary Forces suffered 70,000 military war casualties.[1] As the American casualty list continued to lengthen throughout the summer of 1918, President Woodrow Wilson's generals and their European allies planned future battle campaigns projected to last well into 1919.[2] The article, "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning: Women of America Asked to Forego Gloomy Evidences of Grief--Black Band on Sleeve to Be a Badge of Honor for the Bereaved," appeared in the *New York Times* on July 7, 1918. It encouraged women, related to military service members who had died or may yet perish in the war, to wear a small insignia, a black armband with a gold star, instead of the traditional garments of black for public mourning.[3] This half page article located in the magazine section of the Sunday edition, nestled between the current war news about the horrors of "Mustard Gas

[1] George Thompson, "American Military Operations and Casualties in 1917-18: Medicine in the First World War," *University of Kansas Medical Center,* last modified July 26, 2018, http://www.kumc.edu/wwi/index-of-essays/american-military-operations-and-casualties.html. Causalities are those who could no longer engage in battle due to death, injury, disease, taken as prisoner, or missing in action.

[2] Robert H. Ferrell, *America's Deadliest Battle: Meuse-Argonne, 1918* (Lawrence, Kansas*:* University Press of Kansas, 2007), 35.

[3] "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning: Women of America Asked to Forego Gloomy Evidences of Grief--Black Band on Sleeve to Be a Badge of Honor for the Bereaved," *New York Times,* July 7, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100001590).

Warfare" and the "Need of Still Larger [American] Armies," specifically addressed women.[4]

During World War I women's grief over the war fallen was manipulated for political ends. This manipulation of public mourning brought about a permanent change in the way women publicly mourned civilian deaths as opposed to war related military deaths. This distinction in mourning resulted in a legacy known as the Gold Star. This legacy would become the definition of a woman's patriotic character while making her grief a product for political use not only during World War I, but future wars as well.

[4] "Mustard Gas Warfare: Man Who Makes it Tells of Science's Deadliest Weapon and How United States Army Will Use It in Quantities," *New York Times,* July 07, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100002371); "Need of Still Larger Armies: Though America Has Done Great Things, Senator Wadsworth Points to Evidence That Nation IS Still Skittish of Adequate Preparedness and Lacking in Military Foresight Need of Still Larger Armies," *New York Times* July 07, 1918, Committee on Public Information, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100000419).

II. HISTORIOGRAPHY

Lisa M. Budreau's work, "The Politics of Remembrance: The Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimage and America's Fading Memory of the Great War," refers to the change in mourning as a "popular women's movement to abolish traditional black mourning dress…prompted by the chairman of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense." This assumption fails to recognize the networking of suffragists or their key leaders through the Woman's Committee or the interactions and political purposes of Dr. Anne Howard Shaw, the chairman of the Woman's Committee, and Wilson's collaboration on the subject.[5] Holly S. Fenelon's 2010 research, *American Gold Star Mothers INC.: 1928-2010-A History,* acknowledges Shaw and her committee, but suggests that, "despite the efforts of the Women's Committee to communicate the suggestion, the armband idea was met with little enthusiasm by the public."[6] Newspaper accounts of the Red Cross' orders of armbands to supply the general population prove otherwise. It is most likely that wearing the armband alone was not popular, but Fenelon's work does indicate enthusiasm for the "gold star as the symbol of a parent's ultimate loss." [7] Fenelon also suggests before the armband proposal, "Wilson feared that the mounting casualties and related mourning across the nation would result in Americans

[5] Lisa M. Budreau, "The Politics of Remembrance: The Gold Star Mothers' Pilgrimage and America's Fading Memory of the Great War," *Journal of Military History* 72, no.2 (2008): 385; Text, newspapers, and magazine articles indicate *Women's Committee* was an acceptable shortened version of the official title *Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense* and the word 'Woman' was interchangeable with 'Women.'

[6] Holly S. Fenelon*, American Gold Star Mothers INC.: 1928-2010 A History*, (Doylestown, Pennsylvania: Platform Press, 2010), 31.

[7] Fenelon, *American Gold Star*, 31.

losing the will to win the war which would prolong the fight, increase the losses, and possibly result in an Allied defeat. But Wilson was unsure what could be done to alleviate the problem."[8]

Carol Acton in her work, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse,* points out "a wartime culture must be particularly vigilant in constructing grief and mourning behavior in a way that supports rather than undermines the state's pursuit of war aims."[9] Acton's work covers public mourning with an emphasis on gender, yet when referring to the gold star and the progressive women's groups of World War I, Acton simply refers to them as "the women's section of the Committee of National Defense."[10] Acton does not mention Shaw and Wilson as part of the armband proposal for manipulating public grief.

Suzanne Evans, author of *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs; World War I and the Politics of Grief*, makes the same mistake in referring to women, especially mothers and the gold star. She also fails to explain the politics behind the change in public grieving. Acton and Evans, acknowledge the political manipulation of wartime mourning through women, but neglect the crucial role of networking in spreading the popularity of the gold star as a way of expressing public grief for women, thereby glorifying military deaths.

Referring to biographies or articles about those involved in the networking to change public mourning proves problematic as well. President Woodrow Wilson, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, and members of the Woman's Committee or the authors of works about these people considered the change inconsequential. John Milton Cooper does not mention

[8] Fenelon, *American Gold Star*, 29.
[9] Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse, (*New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2.
[10] Acton, *Grief in Wartime*, 160.

Shaw, the Woman's Committee, or the gold star in his book, *Woodrow Wilson; A Biography*. Cooper does however, detail Wilson's anguish concerning the loss of his wife Ellen as he writes, "Woodrow Wilson felt devastated by grief over his wife's death, but he had to snatch moments from his mourning to respond to this world calamity (World War I)".[11] In his grief and sorrow Wilson, "doubted rather he could live up to people's expectations, especially if he could repeat his earlier feats as a legislative leader."[12] Wilson's understanding of the power mourning had in his own life serves to strengthen the argument for his part in the manipulation of public grief for political purposes.

James R. McGovern writes in his article, "Anna H. Shaw and Feminism," that "Shaw was appointed chairman of the Woman's Committee… to coordinate women's work on conservation and the sale of war bonds."[13] This is typical of the information provided to describe Shaw's war work activities. Wil Linkugel and Kim Giffin, the authors of, "The Distinguished War Service of Dr. Anna Howard Shaw," do not mention her work on changing public mourning for the fallen. However, they do confirm her ability as Chair of the Woman's Committee to reach the nation's women "in every state and in Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico."[14] The authors also state, 'The organization eventually embraced 18,000 units, capable, in at least one state," of initially contacting "82,000 women."[15]

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[11] John Milton Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 2009), 262.
[12] Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson*, 307.
[13] James R. McGovern, "Anna Howard Shaw: New Approaches to Feminism," *Journal of Social History*, 3 no. 2 (Winter, 1969-1970), 138, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3786240, (accessed February 14, 2020).
[14] Linkugel, Wil A., and Kim Giffin, "The Distinguished War Service of Dr. Anna Howard Shaw," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 28, no. 4 (1961): 375, www.jstor.org/stable/27770062 (accessed February 14, 2020).
[15] Linkugel, "The Distinguished War Service," 375.

Through their organizational skills and national contacts, Shaw and her committee board became "the connecting link between the national government through the state divisions and the individual woman."[16]

Carrie Chapman Catt served in several areas on the Woman's Committee. Catt was a member of the Executive Board and of its Liberty Loan Division, and the Chair of its Department of Educational Propaganda and Patriotic Education. Ida Clark, also a member of the Woman's Committee and author of *American Women and the World War*, records Catt's explanation about the need for patriotic education. Catt explained that, "millions of people in the United States did not clearly understand why we were at war or the imperative necessity of winning the war if future generations were to be protected from the menace of an unscrupulous militarism" and that "there was evidence on every side of ignorance and apathy on the part of the people."[17] After the war, Jacqueline Van Voris, author of *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life*, summarized Catt's attitude towards wartime work by writing that once Catt was "[r]eleased from condoning a war she supported only for political expedience, she began at once to talk about what women could do to end all war."[18] Later in her life's reflection of the war years Catt referred to the purpose of the Woman's Committee's as a group for "entertaining the women" and a waste of time.[19]

Carrie Chapman Catt, along with a handful of other committee members, allowed their names to appear at the end of the article, "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War

[16] Linkugel, "The Distinguished War Service," 376.
[17] Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, (New York: Appleton and Company,, 1918), 103.
[18] Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1987), 152.
[19] Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 142.

Mourning," in support of its message. The committee educated the public on their patriotic duty to support the war. But they were complicit in creating a two-tier hierarchy of public mourning, one for soldiers (more patriotic) and the other for everyone else (implicitly less patriotic). They did this to get political leverage in the fight to gain votes for women.

As Wilson, Shaw, and, Catt assessed their life's accomplishments through their power of political influence, many thousands of others considered their lives' achievements through the gold star legacy. The average age of the United States' soldier in World War I "was just under twenty-five" years old.[20] By the time World War II began those same men would be in their forties. Many women were mothers during both wars. Obituaries for these women might read as the following for Mrs. Susan Myers:

> Gold Star Mother of Two Wars-Son Killed Day War Declared Browning, Mo., Oct. 31Mrs. Susan Myers, a gold star mother of two World Wars, died on Wednesday. Gernie T. Myers, her youngest son, was killed on the first day the United States entered the present war. Claude, another son, was killed in action in France on June 9, 1918.[21]

The obituary describing Susan Myers' life, defined by the meaning and consequences of two wars, was not about her, but about her relationship to the state through the gold star symbol she represented.

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[20] George Brownie, ed. David L. Snead, *An American Soldier in World War* I, (Nebraska: University of Nebraska University, 2006), 18.

[21] "Mrs. Susan Myers: Gold Star Mother of Two Wars --Son Killed Day War Declared," *New York Times,* November 01, 1942, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (106376181).

When considering governments, political agendas, and organizations it's perhaps necessary to look at public grief through a different lens, which reveals the placement of military mourning within an "organizational context."'[22] Udi Lebe's article, "Panopticon of Death: Institutional Design of Bereavement," theorizes "By appropriating the population's private bereavement, the government incorporates the family as a key element in regime management of national solidarity."[23] The government, through the Woman's Committee's networking, began its appropriation of the population's social grieving practices concerning a military death by altering the visibility of women's public mourning.

Once seized, the key element of control over women's public bereavement concerning military losses, a door opened for the government to build citizen solidarity for not only its wars, but also the aftermath insuring through correct public mourning even the validation of the industrialized killing. The shrouding of military deaths in honor, glory, and pride rather than grief eliminates the suggestion of a military death in vain, while simultaneously condemning family members who protest the loss. The Woman's Committee and Wilson's combined efforts in helping to change and utilize public mourning at best is treated as a mere comma in the history of World War I, at worst, it has been contorted or totally neglected. Yet, it is a vital part in understanding how the "personal becomes political."

[22] Udi Lebel, "Panopticon of Death: Institutional Design of Bereavement," Acta Sociologica 54 no.4 (December, 2011), 351, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41330471 (accessed November 4, 2019).
[23] Lebel, "Panopticon," 356.

By 1920, the year Nellie Duff published her work, *Sangamon County Honor Book*, the term "gold star mother" represented the preferred female patriot.[24] Suzanne Evans, author of *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War 1 and the Politics of Grief*, argues "[n]o character more poignantly recalls sacrifice than the mother. How she fulfills her role reflects how a society balances conflicting desires for memory – honoring the slain – and for amnesty-safeguarding the future." [25] Yet, Evans, like other modern historians, such as Lisa M. Budreau, and Robert H. Zieger, have fallen prey to the same trap of trying to generalize the complex and politically charged gold star emblem primarily by focusing on the gold star mother.

These authors do not dwell on the evolution of the gold star. Although they have captured the term "gold star mother" and dissected it through different disciplines in their efforts to explain the concept of the gold star, they have embraced a definition sculpted by the government for political and military purposes. Evans simply states the gold star "was given to mothers and wives of servicemen who had died while serving in World War I," but in the beginning and throughout the rest of the war encouragement to shed the black of mourning for the armband with a gold star was inclusive of all female relatives. Budreau dismisses other female relatives as well by capsulizing the definition

[24] Nellie Browne Duff, *The Honor Book: Sangamon County Illinois* 1917-1918, (Illipolis, Illinois: A.P. Bickenbach, 1920).

[25] Suzanne Evans, Introduction, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 2007), 12. The Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages were government sponsored trips for a select number of mothers and wives by way of a national lottery to visit the graves of their fallen sons buried in France.

of gold star mother as "mothers and widows, so named for the emblem they were encouraged to display on armbands and service flags."[26]

Budreau's sketch of the historical origin of the gold star emblem attempts to explain the change in public mourning for a military death by linking Wilson and the Woman's Committee; however, she does not consider the hierarchy of death, honor, or gender through the lens of the community. Zieger limits his definition to one paragraph in his work, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience*, by referencing the Gold Star Mothers' Pilgrimages to American military cemeteries in Europe.[27]

[26] Lisa M. Budreau, "The Politics of Remembrance: The Gold Star Mothers' Pilgrimage and America's Fading Memory of the Great War," *The Journal of Military History*, 72 (April 2008): 372-373.
[27] Robert H. Zieger*, America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (New York*:* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 112.

III. A NATION'S PUBLIC MOURNING OF THE MILITARY WAR DEAD PRIOR TO WORLD WAR I

President Abraham Lincoln respected and participated in the traditional public mourning rituals during the Civil War. He did not distinguish between military and civilian deaths, nor did the majority of citizens of the North and South. The first Union officer killed in the war was Colonel Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth, the president's close friend. The public mourning surrounding his death included "an American flag, dressed in crape, flying at half-mask" during the funeral.[28]

On May 25, 1861, Lincoln wrote the parents of the twenty-four-year-old soldier, "In the hope that it may be no intrusion upon the sacredness of your sorrow, I have ventured to address you this tribute to the memory of my young friend, and your brave and early fallen child. May God give you that consolation which is beyond all earthly power."[29] He closed his letter with "Sincerely your friend in a common affliction."[30] Lincoln commiserated with their sorrow and grief. Perhaps his words of "common affliction" reflected his own sorrow as a parent over the loss of a child, regardless of their age or occupation.[31]

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[28] "Course of Events: Death of Col. Ellsworth. Treason in Virginia," *New York Evangelist*, May 30, 1861, *32*, 5. ProQuest American Periodical, http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/docview/125423925?accountid=15141 (accessed January 28, 2017)

[29] Don E. Fehrenbacher and Roy P. Basler, *Lincoln-Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865: Speeches, Letters, and Miscellaneous Writings, Presidential Messages and Proclamations (*New York, N.Y: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1989), 243.

[30] Fehrenbacher, *Lincoln-Speeches,* 243.

[31] Abraham Lincoln's second son, Edward Baker Lincoln, died at the age of three in 1850.

Three years later, in mid-June1864 during a speech at Philadelphia's Great Central Sanitary Fair, following the news of heavy Federal causalities from Grant's advance on Petersburg, Virginia, Lincoln again acknowledged encompassing grief due to military deaths.[32] He said, "It [the war] has carried mourning to almost every home, until it can almost be said that the 'heavens are hung in black.' "[33]

Mourning over a military death was equally acceptable in the South. Drew Gilpin Faust, author of *The Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* writes, "In the South, where 18 percent of white males of military age perished in the war, death was omnipresent, and fabrics and fashions were scarce."[34] Regardless of the shortage, the women desired to reflect personal feelings of mourning through their attire in the hopes of solidarity with others who suffered such a grief.[35] In the Union army the "rate of death of men of military age was one-third that in the Confederacy," so fewer women in the North lost a loved one.[36] Nonetheless, despite the devastating conditions of the Civil War, and regardless of the widow's political persuasion or economic situation, obligations to public mourning still existed and women wore what mourning garments they could obtain to best meet their social obligation.[37]

A rumored story about Mary Lincoln demonstrates society's rigid and exacting attitude towards mourning rituals during the Civil War. Allegedly, Mrs. Lincoln received

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[32] Ronald C. White, Jr., *A. Lincoln: A Biography*, (New York: Random House, 2009), 636-637.
[33] Fehrenbacher, *Lincoln-Speeches and Writings,* 600.
[34] Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 146-149.
[35] Faust, *This Republic*, 146-149.
[36] Faust, *This Republic*, 151-153.
[37] Faust, *This Republic*, 150-153.

public criticism for wearing lilac attire rather than traditional mourning colors to Colonel Edward D. Baker's funeral on October 24, 1861. Mrs. Lincoln reportedly told a friend, "I wonder if the women of Washington expect me to muffle myself up in mourning for every soldier killed in this great war?"[38] Her friend replied, "But Mrs. Lincoln, do you not think black more suitable to wear at a funeral because there is a great war in the nation?"[39]

Twenty-six years later Colonel Francis G. Young, the Civil War staff member responsible for the funeral of Colonel Baker recorded, "Had the color of Mrs. Lincoln's hat and dress at the funeral been incongruous with her open manifestations of sorrow, I could not have failed to remark and remember. I can not *[sic]* undertake to name the exact hue of every ribbon in her hat, but the prevailing color of her costume was dark, perfectly befitting the sad occasion."[40] Such "an oft-repeated and malicious story," true or not, concerning the public mourning attire Mary Lincoln wore to Colonel Baker's funeral, demonstrates the power of a socially constructed attitude towards gender over the issue of publicly mourning a soldier's death.[41]

During the middle of the Civil War (1863), a magazine correspondent recorded a somber observation in Washington D.C. He wrote, "A military funeral is a thing of weekly, almost daily, occurrence in Washington, and yet I never stop on the sidewalk and

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[38] Michael Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*, *Volume II* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 271.
[39] Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln,* 271.
[40] Paul E. Shipman, "Mrs. Abraham Lincoln: An Oft-Reported and Malicious Story Concerning Her Contradicted," *New York Times* July 24, 1887*,* ProQuest Historical Newspapers (94538929).
[41] Shipman, "Mrs. Abraham Lincoln."

listen to the mournful music, to the muffled drums-I never gaze at the riderless *[sic]* horse and the reversed arms-without gaining a more deep and thorough appreciation of the horrors of war."[42] Military funerals, as all funerals of the time, were sorrowful public events designed to go beyond the visual and fill all the senses. It was an experience of sad sights, colors, and sounds, including the muffling of drums by covering them with crepe to produce "their deep, running, murmuring sound" during a soldier's funeral.[43]

Memorial services taking place across the nation after the Civil War for fallen Union soldiers, included symbols of mourning mixed with military processions and words of recollection. The Civil War Memorial service at Mt. Fake Cemetery in Waltham, Massachusetts on May 30, 1868 encouraged those attending to "remember the first soldier funeral; the tolling bell, the draped church, the words of consolation, the solemn requiem, and the funeral march."[44] Across the country Memorial Day scenes in1868 resembled the one at Mt. Fake Cemetery.

In Fredrick, Maryland at the Mount Olivet Cemetery, a procession of "Veterans, bearing three large flags, at half mast, draped in mourning, each Soldier wearing crape *[sic]* on his left arm, and bearing a wreath on his right" marched to the cemetery to pay

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[42] W. B. D., "Our Washington Correspondence," *The Independent ...Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts (1848-1921), (*New York*),* June 4, 1863. http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/docview/90139285?accountid=15141. (accessed January 15, 2017).

[43] *The Muffled Drum*, (Charleston: South Carolina Tract Society, 1861), 1-No.46, Internet Archive, PDF. https://archive.org/details/muffleddrum00sout/page/n1/mode/2up (accessed February 2, 2018). Internet Archive, PDF.

[44] Frank Moore, *Memorial Ceremonies at the Graves of Our Soldiers: Saturday*, *May 30, 1868*, (Washington City: United States, Congress 40th, 2nd session: 1867-1868, 1869) 233. Internet Archive: Digital Library-PDF, https://archive.org/details/memorialceremoni00mooriala/mode/2up
(accessed November 12, 2017).

honor and grieve the loss of their fallen comrades.[45] Those living in Washington D.C. or visiting the city to attend the 1868 Civil War Memorial Service at Arlington found the Arlington Mansion's columns "draped in mourning and decorated with flags" offering evidence of lingering sorrow over the loss of those military lives three years after the Civil War's end.[46] Similar ceremonies took place throughout the Union states. The government provided "instructions from the Headquarters of the Grand Army of the Republic," concerning the newly conceived ritual of placing "the flag of the nation draped with expressive emblems of mourning" over fallen Union soldiers' burial gravesites or monuments.[47] Even years after his death in the Civil War, a soldier's remembrance would include public symbols of mourning.

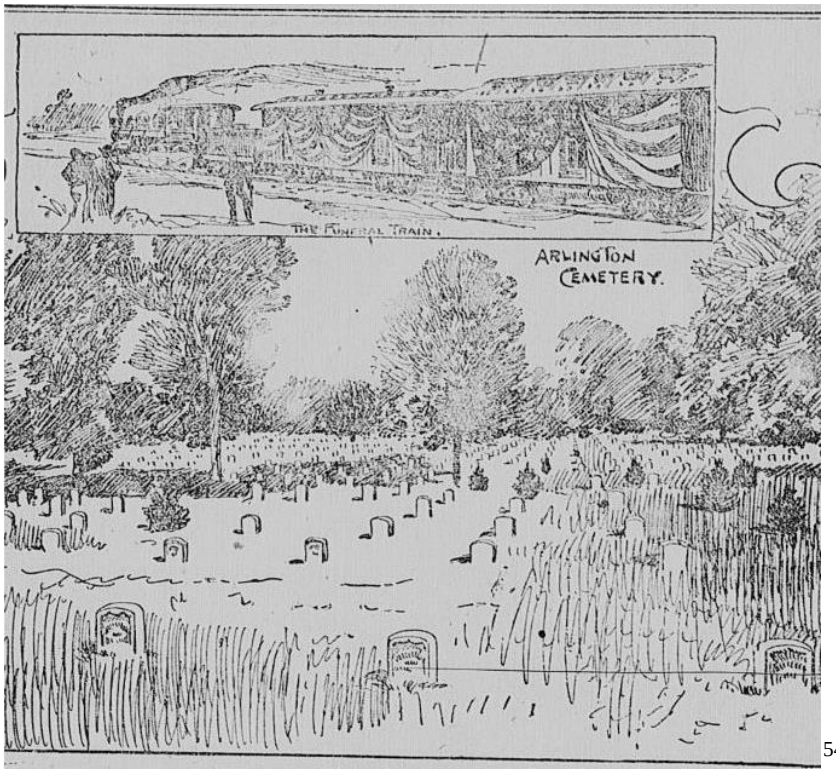
The Spanish-American War began in the spring of 1898 and included a three year occupation of the Philippines resulting in the "loss of four thousand American military lives."[48] The majority of these deaths were due to disease and lack of essential supplies because of careless government administration and poor management which enhanced the public's resentment towards the unpopular war.[49]

President William McKinley asked Congress for a declaration of war against Spain in April 1898. One year later, President McKinley's Executive Order (April 3, 1899) described those who died in the Philippines and "still rest where they fell," as

[45] Frank Moore, *Memorial*, 76.
[46] Frank Moore, *Memorial*, 21.
[47] Frank Moore, *Memorial*, 65.
[48] Lisa M. Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America*, *1919-1933* (New York and London: New York University, 2010), 27.
[49] Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 27.

"mourned with the love of a grateful nation."[50] Later, in accordance with the Executive Order, the remains of the "brave officers and men who perished" in the Philippines would be retrieved and buried with honor at Arlington Cemetery in "ground sacred to the soldiers and sailors amid the tributes of military honor and national mourning they have so well deserved."[51] During the second half of 1899, in a public government effort to honor the dead, special funeral trains "heavily draped in black, emblematic of a nation's sorrow" transported the remains of many of those soldiers and sailors to Arlington for burial.[52] During the burial, an executive order required "the customary salute of mourning be fired at the cemetery."[53]

[50] William McKinley, Executive Order Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/205961 (accessed May 8, 2020).
[51] McKinley, Executive Order, *The American Presidency Project*.
[52] "With Remains of Heroes," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, (Seattle, Washington) April 2, 1899, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045604/1899-04-02/ed-1/seq-3/ (accessed December 20, 2018); "The Third Funeral Train," *The Evening Times*, (Washington, D.C.) April 29, 1899, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024441/1899-04-29/ed-1/seq-1/, (accessed February 2, 2018).
[53] "Arlington Cemetery, Burial Place of Santiago Heroes," *Virginian-Pilot* (Norfolk, Virginia) April 4, 1899, From Library of Congress, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071779/1899-04-04/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed February 3, 2018).



[54]

McKinley believed it vital to quickly identify the soldiers' remains and in time bring them home for a "proper burial" meaning "repatriation to American soil for interment," thus the funeral trains began their task.[55] This practice allowed the government an opportunity to secure and care for the unidentifiable or unclaimed American soldiers' remains for a "proper burial" in a national military cemetery. One reason for McKinley's public show of honor and concern over the soldiers' remains probably developed from his experience as a Civil War veteran. However, as suggested by Lisa M. Budreau in her work, *Bodies of War, Bodies of War: World War I and the*

[54] "Arlington Cemetery, *"Virginian-Pilot*, April 4, 1899, From Library of Congress, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071779/1899-04-04/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed January 31, 2019). Illustration depicts funeral train cars embellished with flags of national pride and black mourning bunting.
[55] Micki McElya, *The Politics of Mourning: Death and Honor in Arlington National Cemetery* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 143-145.

Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933, the concern also proved convenient as a political maneuver to shift the nations' focus from resentment about the war to one of honoring the fallen.[56]

McKinley began his military career by enlisting as a private in 1861 in the Union Army and ended his service in 1865 as a brevet major. He was aware of the terrible circumstances surrounding hasty "large pit" burials of numerous bodies on the battlefields and the living's necessary abandonment of fallen comrades to the elements with little hope of identifying or even finding their remains.[57] The Civil War battlefield burials left "hundreds of thousands" of family members with the agony of mourning the fate of their missing loved ones instead of the solace sometimes found in cemeteries or during the memorial services held amid the graves of the military fallen.[58]

On April 21, 1914, by command of President Woodrow Wilson, the United States Navy began a seven month occupation of the port city of Veracruz, Mexico which cost the lives of seventeen service men.[59] On May 11, 1914 a national ceremony, honoring the recovered American military dead took place. The somber procession of seventeen caskets containing the recovered remains of sailors and Marines became the focal point of the national ceremony as it moved through the streets to the Brooklyn Navy Yard while thousands watched.[60] The flag covered coffins rested on caissons, wagons built to

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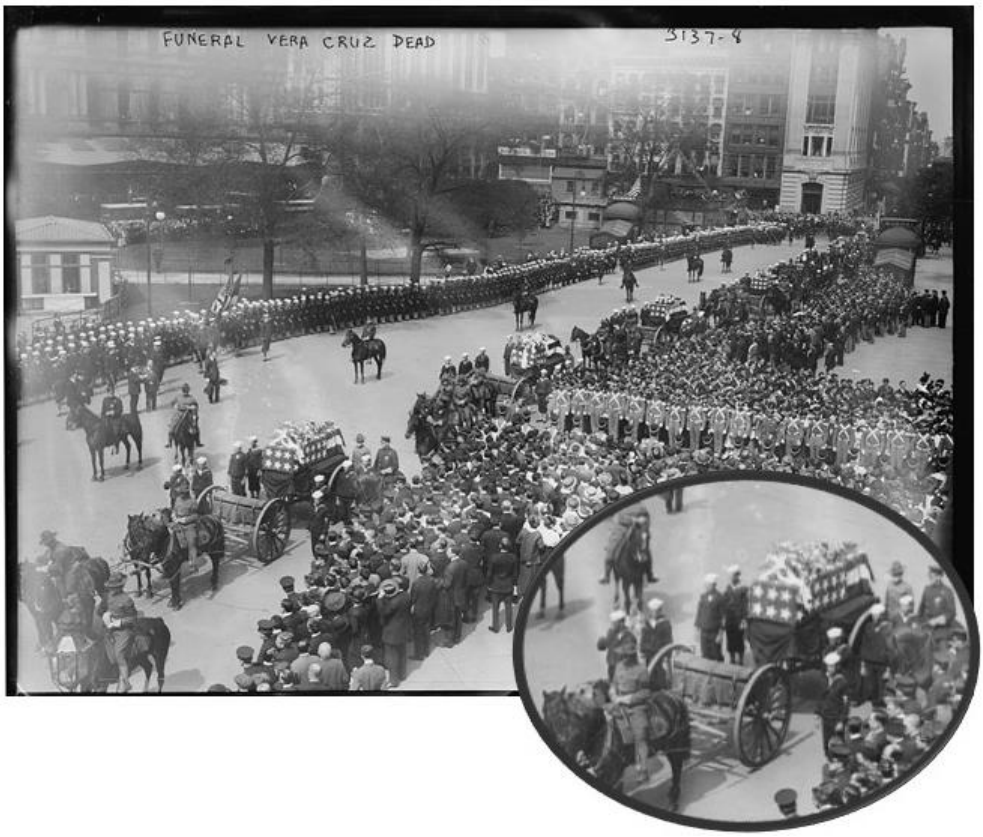
[56] Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 27-36.
[57] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 71.
[58] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 170.
[59] Mitchel Yockelson, "The United States Armed Forces and the Mexican Punitive Expedition: Part 1," *Prologue* 29:3, Fall 1997, last modified December 14, 2017, https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1997/fall/mexican-punitive-expedition-1.html.
[60]"Nation Honors Vera Cruz Dead in Grieving City: Bodies of Seventeen Men Killed in Mexico Taken from the Battleship Montana," *New York Times,* May 12, 1914, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (97686641);

carry ammunition but in the time-honored tradition also transported military caskets. The caissons draped with traditional bereavement bunting around the sides indicated to those present the importance of publicly mourning military deaths.



[61]

The ceremony and the mournful music of Fredrick Chopin's, *The Funeral March*, merging with the somber appearance of the City Hall's "columns and façade…covered

"Ready to Take His Place: Brothers of Marine Killed in Mexico so Inform President," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), April 30, 1914, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1914-04-30/ed-1/seq-2/ (accessed February 2, 2018). Samuel Meisnberg entered the Service under the name Samuel Marten.

[61] Bain News Service, Publisher, Funeral-Vera Cruz Dead-N.Y., 1914, Photograph, https://www.loc.gov/item/2014696475/ (accessed February 20, 2020). Picture in oval frame is enlargement of first horse-drawn caisson draped in bereavement bunting.

with black" created a sorrowful atmosphere.[62] The front page of the *New York Times* article described the ceremony's funeral procession and the words of the guest speaker, President Woodrow Wilson, under the headline "Nation Honors Vera Cruz Dead in Grieving City."[63] The *New York Times'* reporter recalled, "as the carriage bearing President Wilson passed in the wake of the flag-draped coffins…The President was silent and very grave. Months ago, he had foreseen all this-the flag-wrapped coffins, the sorrowing families of the dead, the mourning crowd. His square jaw was set as he rode in the open carriage, and his eyes were misty as he repeatedly raised his hat and bowed to the multitude."[64] The multitude was close to 1,000,000 people.[65] This event was evidence of the intense and overwhelming power of public mourning.

During his speech, Wilson asserted, "In a war of aggression…there was no pride in death, but to die in a war of service was glorious."[66] As the president spoke the parents of ordinary seaman Albino Eric Stream, one of the fallen sailors, sat listening and watching this public and nationally sanctioned event honoring their son and they in turn, as socially expected, shared their grief and family ties through their apparel.[67] Albino Stream's family, easily identified in the crowd of thousands because of their mourning attire, consisted of "a father, mother, and two sisters."[68] The president, as the nation's

[62] "Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1914.
[63] "Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1914.
[64] "Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1914.
[65] "Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1914.
[66] "Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1914.
[67] "Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1914.
[68] "Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1914.

highest official, acknowledged the loss of a soldier, but the family mourned the loss of a son and a brother.

After the national ceremony, families of the fallen sailors and Marines requested their loved ones' remains returned home for private burial. Some communities of the fallen paid tribute to their service and to their families through military escorts including funeral draped caissons to carry the caskets along main streets lined with uniformed military personnel clasping American, state, or local flags embellished with black crepe streamers in a gesture of community mourning.[69]

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Funeral service of Seamen George McKenzie Poinsett and Ordinary Seaman Charles Allen Smith in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on May 3, 1914, honors the memory of the two men killed during the military conflict in Veracruz, Mexico.

[69] Alexander B. Bartlett and Robert W. Sanders, *Independence Hall and Liberty Bell,* (Charleston, South Charleston: Arcadis Publishing, 2012), 97. The funeral services of Seamen George McKenzie Poinsett and Ordinary Seaman Charles Allen Smith, killed during the occupation of Vera Cruz, took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on May 3, 1914.

[70] Bartlett, *Independence Hall*, 97. Traditional black crepe mourning streamers for military funerals of the time embellish the flags in the photo.

Sammy Meisenberg was one of the fallen Marines honored at the national ceremony in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Not only did the nation and the family of twenty-year old Private Meisenberg publicly mourn his loss but his community did as well. A train from Brooklyn, New York transported Private Meisenberg's body for burial to his home in Chicago. When the train arrived at the Chicago railroad station there "was a large gathering of people, and as soon as the box containing the coffin was caught sight of, evidences of a painful interest and of real grief were manifested on every hand."[71] The mayor and the City Council of Chicago "took official notice of the occasion," which included decorating the City Hall's primary passageway "with furled flags and all mourning emblems."[72] Private Meisenberg's funeral occurred on May 14, 1914 with "nearly five thousand" people in attendance, including "Governor Dunne, United States Senators," and other state officials.[73] President Wilson sent "a large wreath of leaves and ferns tied with mourning garlands and black ribbons" to express his interest in the hometown funeral.[74] Wilson not only approved and contributed to the hometown funeral

[71] Francis A. Eastman, "The Crowd-A Study of the Popular Mind," *Chicago City Manual 1916*, (Chicago: Bureau of Statistics, 1916), Internet Archives PDF, https://archive.org/details/chicagocitymanua1916chic/page/30?q=Samuel+Meisenberg (accessed March 21, 2019).

[72] Eastman, "The Crowd," 31.

[73] "Wilson Presents Floral Tribute: Honors Memory of Chicago Marine Killed When American Took Vera Cruz," *The Richmond Palladium and Sun-Telegram*, (Richmond, Indiana), May 14, 1914, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86058226/1914-05-14/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed January, 27, 2019).

[74] "Sammy Meisnberg Buried," *The Day Book,* (Chicago, Ill.), 14 May 1914, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045487/1914-05-14/ed-2/seq-29/ (accessed February 23, 2020).

of Private Meisenberg by observing the traditional mourning practices of the period, but he lead the nation in publicly mourning military deaths due to war.

IV. WOMEN'S PUBLIC MOURNING CUSTOMS PRIOR TO WORLD WAR 1

During the last half of the nineteenth century, British articles focusing on women's health, economics, and gender discrimination regarding fashions began to emerge, including radical changes for practical purposes in women's mourning garments. News features and editorials inspired by the British women's Rational Dress Society found space in American periodicals and newspapers including *Harper's Bazaar*, *The Arena*, and the *New York Times*.[75] The Rational Dress Society, first based upon the leisure activities of British society's more affluent women, ranged from encouraging reasonable and safe women's clothing for cycling to comments on other areas of women's attire.[76] One of the Rational Dress Society's practical recommendations encouraged women to wear everyday clothing instead of purchasing specific mourning garments, but proposed if black was "more consistent with the feelings, and if ready to hand, the addition of a band of cloth or crape upon the arm, as a mourning badge."[77] The Rational Dress Society's mourning concerns centered on choice in accordance with a woman's situation and wellbeing, rather than meeting social obligations of the time.

An article during 1889 entitled, *Common Sense and Mourning*, based upon the Rational Dress Society's fashion critiques, appeared in the *New York Times.* This article cited specific health issues with women's traditional mourning attire stating that "the

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[75] "The Rational Dress Movement," *Times* (London, England), September 25, 1899, 5. *The Times Digital Archive* (accessed April 12, 2020). https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/apps/doc/CS84600121/TTDA?u=dayt38887&sid=TTDA&xid=e42be65d.

[76] "The Rational Dress," *Times*, September 25, 1899.

[77] Olive Logan, "Rational Dress Movements in England," *Harper's Bazaar* (November 19, 1881): 738, American Periodicals http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/docview/125644022?accountid=15141.

dress of a widow possesses every bad and unhygienic quality of the ordinary female apparel intensified fourfold," the veil alone "trails behind the young widow's head" and "is constantly dragging the head backward and downward," resulting in headaches from long wear.[78] The article included the difference in gender mourning wear by noting "The inconsistency of the custom is made conspicuous by the discrimination made between men and women" for when a husband loses a wife a mere "plain band around his hat, which neither incommodes nor injures him," is all that is required to convey his public mourning.[79] The wife in contrast "is required to array herself in garments which imperil the health" and by etiquette, requires a specific period of wear.[80] Yet, even by the beginning of World War I, the traditional rituals and mourning attire for American women remained much the same as those observed during the Civil War. This fact was not lost on the progressive women's organizations of 1914 as they prepared to protest the war beginning in Europe.

During the first week of August 1914, Britain, Germany, Russia, Serbia, France, and Austria-Hungry were preparing for or were already engaged in the Great War. British Expeditionary Forces were arriving in France and the German invasion of Belgium was under way. Daily bulletins concerning the war in Europe made headlines and filled American newspapers. On August 13, 1914, a committee of two-hundred leading suffragists and women activists, including Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, the president of the

[78] "Common Sense and Mourning," *New York Times,* July 7, 1889, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (94689995).
[79] "Common," *New York Times*, July 7, 1889.
[80] "Common," *New York Times*, July 7, 1889

National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), began planning the August twenty-ninth Women's Peace Parade in protest of the escalating European war and the anticipated deaths of civilians and soldiers.[81] The parade committee sent a courtesy telegram to President Woodrow Wilson informing him of their plans. The week before the Peace March Wilson replied in the form of a "cordial letter of approval."[82]

The organizers of the Peace March also hoped the event would "be a means of stretching out hands of sympathy across the sea to the women and children who suffer and to the men who are forced into the ranks to die."[83] Their purpose was to both protest the war and mourn its victims by marching in traditional black mourning garments in the heat of a New York City August.[84]

[81] "Women Vote for Big Peace Parade," *New York Tribune*, August 13, 1914, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1914-08-13/ed-1/seq-9/ (accessed September 13, 2017); "Will Ask Peace Parade Permit: Women Hope to March in Fifth Avenue War Protest August 29," August 12, 1914, *New York Tribune*, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1914-08-12/ed-1/seq-9/ (accessed September 20, 2017).

[82] "Wilson Approves Parade for Peace: President Writes to Mrs. Henry Villard About Saturday's March. Women Will Wear Black No Public Speaking and N Grouping By Nationalities; - Refugees From War Zone in Line," *New York Times*, August 26, 1914, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (97608437).

[83] "Women Vote for Big Peace Parade," August 13, 1914.

[84] "Protesting Women March in Mourning: Muffled Drums Beat as The Somber Parade Moves Down Fifth Avenue. Hats Raised to Peace Flag Only 1,500 Are in Line, But Crowds along Thoroughfare Show Sympathy by Silence," *New York Times,* August 30, 1914, ProQuest Historical Newspaper (97550954).

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Examples during the Women's Peace Parade of deep mourning with a veil covered face, white attire with black armband, and the crowds.

The Women's Peace Parade resembled a funeral march with the sorrowful sound of muffled drums and a large number of women dressed in various combinations of traditional mourning attire. Dull black crepe, the symbolic material of deepest mourning, was the fabric used in many of the mourning dresses and accessories, as well as, the acceptable white attire of summer mourning trimmed in black, which was in keeping with several etiquette books and fashion articles of the day.[87] Stringent customs and rituals based upon family ties and gender determined the mourning apparel and the timeline for wearing such garments.[88] Deepest mourning, the first phase of bereavement in a widow's life, lasted at least one and a half years, but if she desired the rest of her existence.[89]

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[85] Bain News Service, Publisher, *Peace Parade, 1914* (date created or published later by Bain), Photograph, https://www.loc.gov/item/2014697176/ (accessed February 20, 2020).
[86] Bain News Service, Publisher, *Peace Parade, 1914* (date created or published later by Bain), Photograph, https://www.loc.gov/item/2014697174/ (accessed February 20, 2020).
[87] Fedef, Joel, "*Correct Autumn Garb for the Woman in Mourning*," *Burlington Weekly Free Press* (Burlington, Vermont.), October 15, 1914, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86072143/1914-10-15/ed-1/seq-10/ (accessed September 20, 2017).
[88]Emily Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette* (Doubleday, Page and Company, 1915): 328-330.
[89] Helen L. Roberts, *Putnam's Handbook of Etiquette: A Cyclopaedia [sic]of Social Usage, Giving Manners and Customs of the Twentieth Century,* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 507: Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette,* 328.

Second mourning or lighter mourning allowed somber colors, including grays and mauves, to relieve or replace the all black of deepest mourning.[90] Many of these same socially acceptable mourning customs and rituals applied to mothers after the "loss of an adult child."[91] Women who lost family members other than a husband or grown child still observed the same basic mourning customs but expressed them through less rigorous attire and shorter mourning periods. [92]

Helen L. Roberts, the author of *Putnam's Handbook of Etiquette,* captures the tone of the period concerning differences in gender expectations regarding public mourning as she writes, "Men are far less punctilious than women in the adherence to the rules that regulate the dress of mourners. Where, however, a gentleman prefers to adopt the somber raiment that signifies a family bereavement, he wears black appeal for his relatives for that length of time that a woman evinces thereby her feelings of respect." [93] Socially required, female mourners displayed respect through dress and actions; male mourners had a choice. Mourning rituals defined not only family relationships and gender behavior, but also class, for it was the privileged and thus the more prominent of society who could indulge in the detailed etiquette of mourning while setting the trends for others to follow.

A general understanding of mourning customs allowed the Women's Peace Parade to communicate its message effectively. A newspaper reporter wrote, "Some of

[90] *Putnam's Handbook*, 507; Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette,* 328.
[91] *Putnam's Handbook*, 508.
[92] *Putnam's Handbook,* 508.
[93] *Putnam's Handbook,* 509.

the women wore dresses of deep mourning" and the "general silence of the great gathering was considered the best evidence of understanding."[94] The visual power of grief's black cloth was a foretelling of the continuing price European families would pay in death and disaster for years to come.

Wilson understood the symbols of mourning used in the Peace Parade that day politically and personally. On August 12, 1914, the *New York Tribune* printed two articles on the same page dealing with public displays of mourning. One highlighted information about the planning committee of the Women's Peace Parade and the other described the funeral of Mrs. Ellen Louise Axon Wilson, President Wilson's first wife.

The paper reported on the burial of Mrs. Wilson in her childhood hometown of Rome, Georgia, describing the town's public observance of mourning which included the carrying of her gray draped casket through "black draped streets" to her former family church.[95] The church was "draped in black, with intertwined wreaths of white flowers."[96] The tangible displays of community and private mourning through shades of black and gray demonstrated the involvement of family, friends, and community in recognizing the loss of a cherished life while acknowledging the present and future sorrow attached to the passing of Mrs. Wilson. The organizers of the Women's Peace Parade intended to use the

[94] "Protesting Women March," *New York Times*, August 30 1914.
[95] "Downpour as Mrs. Wilson is Buried: President in Tears as Coffin Lowered into Grave," *New York Tribune*, August 12, 1914, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1914-08-12/ed-1/seq-9/ (accessed September 20, 2017).
[96] "Downpour," August 12, 1914.

same colors and similar tangible displays to convey the inevitable loss of civilian and military lives due to war.

The parade's powerful symbolic imagery was inescapable in its message because in daily life a woman who dressed in mourning represented a unique reality. A woman's public mourning attire symbolized a particular death conveying not only loss but also family relationships. However, attire did not speak to the occupation of the deceased or the particulars of the events surrounding the death. Strangers who viewed a woman in mourning attire on the streets of their community would understand her loss, but unless they had been personally acquainted with her or attended the funeral, would not know if her male relative was a civilian or a soldier, nor if they had died from natural causes, an accident, or on the battlefield. Details surrounding the death became public knowledge only at the time of the funeral or if reported in newspapers.

The parade's message of protest through the wearing of black traditional mourning attire was not the only message of protest conveyed on that day. Interaction with the parade's observers was a key element to the day's success. Therefore, the planning committee requested in recognition of the parade's objective "every man, woman and child who comes out to watch the parade wear a black band on the left arm or some other symbol of sorrow and sympathy."[97] Such symbols of sorrow were also symbols of public protest, visible and supportive of the Women's Peace Parade message concerning war.

[97] "Ask Mourning Display: Women's Peace Parade Manager Would Have City in Black," *New York Times,* August 28, 1914, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (97592893).

V. WOMEN AND THE BLACK ARMBAND OF PROTEST AND SORROW

The armband, exclusively a male expression of grief, was not kindly looked upon as appropriate for funerals by etiquette and fashion standards alike, because the black band on a man's arm reflected "a cheap way of mourning" and "show[ed] no distinction, being the same for a wife, as a distant relative."[98] The black armband evolved as an English class based practice that gained acceptance as a "compromise between the demands of society and the thrift of the master of the house" to attire male servants in the guise of mourning while avoiding the cost of black mourning garments.[99] Fashion magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar* warned well-mannered American men one should "never wear as a token of respect to a departed friend a band of black on the sleeve of a covert coat [gentlemen's overcoat]. This is not correct mourning. In fact, it is not mourning at all, and it is very ugly…though popular in London."[100]

Mourning bands are not mentioned in connection to female family members as part of correct mourning apparel even as late as 1922, although it was becoming more acceptable for men because the bands seemed "sensible for many reasons, the first being that of economy. Men's clothes do not come successfully from the encounter with dye vats, nor lend themselves to 'alterations,' and an entire new wardrobe is an unwarranted

[98] Ellye Howell Glover, *Dane Curtsy's Book of Etiquette*, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1909): 119.
[99] Emily Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette,* 331.
[100] "With the Editor," Harper's Bazaar (New York), March 1907, 41.292,) ProQuest American Periodicals, http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/docview/125015268?accountid=15141. (accessed September 17, 2017).

burden to most."[101] In contrast, the expectation for women still involved the wearing of all dull black garments and veils while observing deep mourning and second mourning. However, women boldly utilized armbands as symbols of protest when defying government actions and policies. Such occasions included protests over the

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The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Protest, 1911 (Black armband in front row).

Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire in March 1911, the Ludlow Massacre in April 1914, and the Women's Peace Parade March in August 1914.[103]

The Triangle Shirtwaist Company tragedy, an industrial fire which claimed the lives of one hundred forty-three garment employees, most of them women, drew crowds

[101] Emily Post, *Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics, and in the Home*, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1923): 405.

[102] "Remembering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire: Mourning & Protest, Victims & Survivors," *Photograph*, Cornell University-ILR, photo 23 of 48, (Marching through cold rain and mud, protesters hoped to rally support. Signs call for fire drills in every shop, closed shops with union contracts, an end to political graft and to days spent working in fire traps.)Photographer: unknown, 1911, Kheel Center image identifier: 5780pb39f17h, Image of 41, https://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/slides/188.html (accessed January 10, 2018)

[103]Jonathan H. Rees, "Ludlow Massacre," *Colorado Encyclopedia*, last modified January 10, 2018, https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/ludlow-massacre, (accessed January 14, 2018).

of immigrant workers and labor activists in protest of unsafe factory working conditions.[104] Protests against garment making companies in general developed because of the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire. Demonstrations against unsafe working conditions included parades, signs, garments of mourning, and the wearing of black armbands by women and men. Such a solidarity of gender through a shared mourning symbol defined a united outcry against the fashion companies' rampant carelessness with their employees' lives for the sake of more profits.

The "silent parade" on April 5, 1911 composed of 120,000 union workers, both women and men, and their allies escorted seven unidentified bodies from the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire through the streets of New York to the Cypress Hills Cemetery in Brooklyn.[105] The *New York Times* reported, "The National colors, draped in mourning, and union banners similarly draped," as well as many union women who wore "bands of black ribbon" around their hats and sleeves attended.[106] *The Evening World*, another New York paper recorded, "the streets were jammed and the thousands with mourning bands on their sleeves struggled through the press seeking for the places assigned them."[107] Among the crowd of 400,000 viewers were suffragists and suffragettes from various

[104] "120,000 Pay Tribute to the Fire Victims: Army of Workers, Most of Them Women, March Through the Downpour of Rain. Throngs along the Line Leaders in the Suffrage Movement, Undismayed by the Weather, Join in the Line of March," *New York Times,* April 06, 1911, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (97160631).
[105] "120,000," *New York Times,* April 06, 1911.
[106] "120,000," *New York Times*, April 6, 1911.
[107] "Mighty Host Honors the Fire's Dead," *The Evening World* (New York, N.Y.), April 5, 1911, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030193/1911-04-05/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed March 11, 2019).

organizations in support of the "silent parade."[108] These activists viewed and perhaps participated in the wearing of the traditional male mourning armband as a powerful visual for a woman's outcry of protest and would later employ such a visual tactic in their own Peace Parade in August 1914 to protest the war waging in Europe.[109]

During April of 1914 a small group of demonstrators, including Upton Sinclair and his wife Grace Hegger Sinclair, marched in front of the Rockefeller's New York Standard Oil offices in protest over the deaths of nineteen people during the Colorado Coal Wars. The deaths included "one guardsman, five miners, and thirteen women and children" who perished on April 20, 1914 in the 'Ludlow Massacre'.[110] While other female demonstrators dressed in traditional mourning garments, Mrs. Sinclair "was attired in a white suit with a band of crepe on the left arm."[111] Upton Sinclair asserted, "Mourning badges [armbands] worn for the dead could not be better displayed than in front of the offices who gave orders that men in the mines should not be permitted to organize."[112] A band of black mourning worn by a woman against a white garment in this event, as in the others mentioned above, did not imply acceptance of a death but a public protest against the perpetrators.

Four years later, the *New York Times* would carry an article proposing a radical change in women's mourning apparel centered on a black armband. However, this

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[108] "120,000," *New York Times*, April 6, 1911.
[109] "120,000," *New York Times*, April 6, 1911.
[110] Rees, "Ludlow Massacre."
[111] "Mourning Line Pickets Office of Rockefeller," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, Oregon), April 29, 1914, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/97071090/1914-04-29/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed September 20, 2017).
[112] "Mourning Line Pickets," April 29, 1914.

discussion would not theorize about women's health or gender discrimination during the bereavement period, but rather it would set into motion a government sanctioned mourning tradition defining a woman's patriotism while making her public grief a national commodity. Entitled, "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning: Women of America Asked to Forego Gloomy Evidences of Grief-Black Band on Sleeve to be a Badge of Honor for the Bereaved," was published on July 7, 1918, fifteen months after America had entered the war. The author endeavored to catch the attention of the reader by harkening back to mourning practices of the women from the Civil War era by capitalizing the first two words of the opening paragraph's beginning line:

> "MOURNING BLACK, for some member of the family who has fallen in war, has in the past been worn more persistently by women than in memory for a death from any other cause. In the larger communities of the country there are now still women who have been in black ever since the civil war, and for years after that war the widows of soldiers, starkly marked out by their sable garb, were seen in every village in the more thickly populated sections."[113]

[113] "Insignia," *New York Times*, July 7, 1918. George Creel, the director of the Committee of Public Information (CPI), made it a point not to overlook any avenue or group of people, including women's groups, who could aid in making the Great War acceptable. With this in mind, Creel created the Division of Women's War-work in the CPI. In the beginning, there was a "staff of twenty-two" female reporters assigned to cover the war work of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense. Although, not always given authorship credit for their articles, it is plausible to conclude any articles which targeted women and fell within the responsibilities of the Woman's Committees' outreach had the advice, editing, and help of this special CPI staff. The author of the article, "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning: Women of America Asked to Forego Gloomy Evidences of Grief--Black Band on Sleeve to Be a Badge of Honor for the Bereaved," most likely was part of this CPI staff. Additional information about this subject is in George Creel's, *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on*

The title addresses the socially understood visible responsibility of women to publicly mourn the dead through their attire, not just at the time of death, but for years afterward.[114] The opening sentence is a subtle warning about the current war which might bring about as many deaths as did the Civil War, implying that in fifty years after the end of the war women would still be wearing black in memory of their fallen loved ones. This introductory statement carefully isolated only military deaths and the wives, sisters, daughters, and mothers who would mourn their loss.

By the end of August 1918, the American casualty count had reached 70,000.[115] American newspapers also reported the tremendous growth in battle losses from all the countries involved in the conflict. Such reports inevitably caused families anticipated grief over more future deaths. The article, "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning," served as the beginning of a process intended to transform women's mourning rituals. The government, through the Woman's Committee, encouraged families to focus on a "newer heroism" displayed through a simple black armband with a gold star rather than the black garments of mourning.

Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, the chairperson of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense (Woman's Committee), stated in the article, "The wearing of the insignia will express far better than mourning the sacrifice that has been made, that

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Public Information that Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe, *XVII,* "Division of Women's War-Work," (Harper & Brothers Publishers New York and London, 1920), 212-221.

[114] Faust, *The Republic*, 148-149.

[115] Thompson, "American Military Operations and Casualties in 1917-18," *University of Kansas Medical Center.*

the loss is a matter of glory rather than one of prostrating grief and depression."[116] Such language was not without authority for President Woodrow Wilson concurred with Shaw in the same article by giving his "cordial indorsement *[sic]*."[117] This unlikely partnership, between Wilson, the man who would not lend his support to the suffrage movement and Shaw, the former president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, allowed them both to use women's grief to further their individual political goals.

During the election of 1916, the Democratic Party credited Wilson, known for his international stance of neutrality, with the slogan "He kept us out of war," often interrupted as a reference to the current brutal conflict in Europe.[118] It would not bode well for Wilson's own reputation or that of his party, if after one year into his second term vast numbers of women dressed in the black of traditional public mourning walked the streets of their communities in response to the increasing number of American war causalities. War related military deaths masked in the cloak of "glory" made political sense as a way to inoculate the administration against a lack of public confidence in the leadership of the White House.[119]

Despite the fact, Wilson handpicked Shaw to be the Chair of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, she viewed it with some distain as she believed the council's purpose originated from "fundamentally wrong principles because

[116] "Insignia, Not Black Gowns," *New York Times*, July 7, 1918.
[117] "Insignia, Not Black Gowns," *New York Times*, July 7, 1918.
[118] John Milton Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York City: Vintage, 2011), 322.
[119] Katherine Verdery, "*The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 33.

the work of the nation should never be defined along sex lines."[120] Nevertheless, it was an opportunity to assist a president whose words could aid in expediting the possibility for women to obtain a national right to vote instead of a state-by-state appeal. The role of the Woman's Committee in the national government created new opportunities for the suffragists and other progressive women's organizations to build political alliances, but alliances often incur political debts. By agreeing to the manipulation of women's public mourning over the deaths of their loved ones during this particular war, they hoped to pressure Wilson into supporting women's suffrage.

Shaw personally acknowledged the importance of public mourning as it resulted in a community's expression of loss along with the family. She wrote "[m]any houses were draped in black and the grief of the citizens manifested itself on every side" after the 1906 funeral of her friend Susan B. Anthony.[121] Yet, eleven years later, she readily sacrificed community comfort to the military families of World War I. Shaw viewed this war, along with its inescapable grief, as an opportunity for women to prove their value as citizens equal in importance to the soldier on the field because as she explained, "Instead of giving away to depression, it is our duty to display the same courage and spirit that they do. If they can die nobly, we must show that we can live nobly." Historian George L. Mosse theorizes such changes in language about the military dead of World War I are needful in order to "make an inherently unpalatable past acceptable, important not just for

[120] Minutes of Staff Meeting, March 28, 1918, R.G. 62, National Archives, **quoted in** Barbara R. Finn, "Anna Howard Shaw and Women's Work," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 4, no. 3 (1979): 24, (accessed April 18, 2020), JSTOR, doi:10.2307/3346144.
[121] Anna Howard Shaw and Elizabeth Garver Jordon, *The Story of a Pioneer,* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1915), 238.

the purpose of consolation but above all for the justification of the nation in whose name the war had been fought."[122]

Ultimately, the Woman's Committee envisioned "a practically universal rejection of the wearing of black in memory of a soldier's death," beginning with the black armband adorned with a gold star.[123] On the surface it would appear American women were exercising their own agency indicating the correct way to mourn their war fallen in the public sphere since they first presented the concept in a public forum. On the contrary, a woman's public display of grief became a political tool for the Wilson administration to help maintain American's support for the war.

Neither Shaw nor Wilson gave a great deal of afterthought to that star shaped piece of gold fabric on a black armband, for neither mentioned it in their writings or as an important achievement in their political careers. Yet, the proposed distinction between the mourning of civilian and military deaths during the war created the legacy known as the Gold Star. This legacy would become the definition of a woman's patriotic character while making her grief a product for political use not only during World War I, but during future American wars as well.

Wearing the new black armband with a gold star radically departed from the past rituals of demonstrating grief over a soldier's death. The conventional mourning badge or armband made of crepe, "considered the obligatory" fabric because it lacked "sheen or

[122] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7.
[123] "Insignia, Not Black Gowns," July 7, 1918.

[a] glossy finish," was now to be made of "any black cloth" available.[124] In addition, the once drab garment of mourning, void of glistening trimmings or embellishments, was now to be adorned with a single gold star "for each member of the family whose life [was] lost in the service" of his country.[125]

During the beginning months of America's entrance into the war as troops mobilized for transportation to Europe, another star, the forerunner of the gold star, was the subject of debate. This star, the focal point of the popular service flag, which hung in homes, businesses, and churches to represent family or community members serving the war effort on foreign soil, began as a blue star centered in a field of white bordered with red. The debate revolved around what color should cover the blue star to best symbolize a family member who died while in serve to their country. A debate which began as a grassroots discussion evolved into a government tool through political intervention and control. Ironically, in the beginning, as the service flag and its debated star gained popularity, the government refused to endorse or recognize it, but with the emergence of the government-sponsored armband with its gold star of glory, both star symbols and their definitions soon became intertwined into a single government-sanctioned and controlled icon.

[124] "Correct Smart Mourning for Street Wear and at Home: When Black is Worn, Gowns Should Be Carefully Studied Out, and The Models Thoughtfully Selected. Black Lynx is the Favorite Fur, in Spite of Its Glossy Appearance -- Long Crepe Veils Passing Out," *New York Times,* February 16, 1908, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (96886397); "Insignia," *New York Times*, July 7, 1918.
[125] "Insignia," *New York Times*, July 7, 1918.

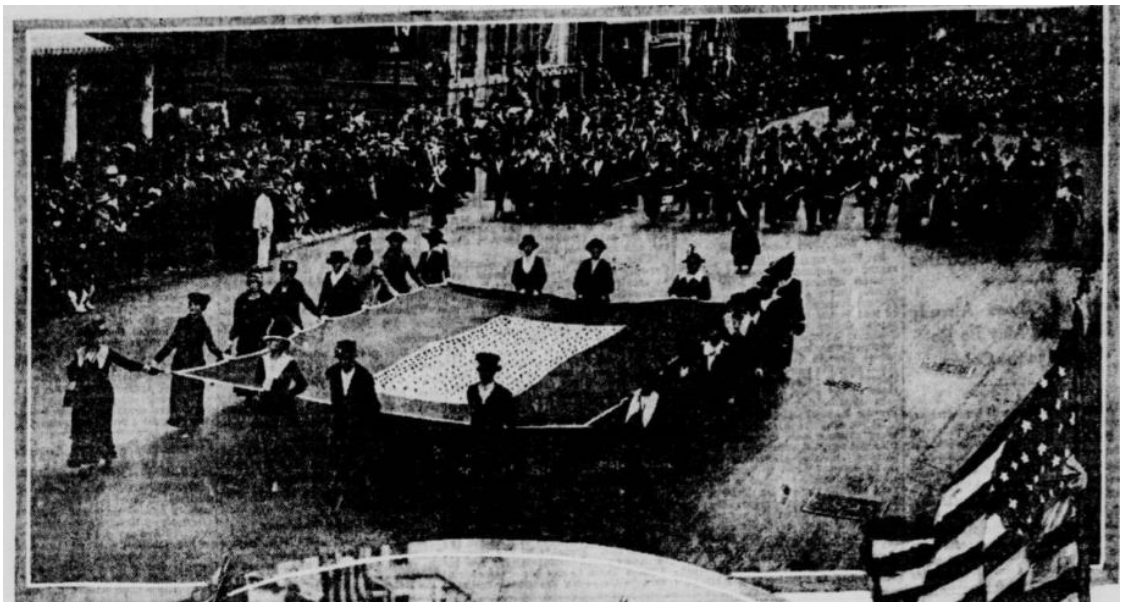
VI. POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF THE GOLD STAR: INSIGNIA NOT BLACK GOWNS

As the rumblings about America entering the war began to surface in 1916, Carrie Chapman Catt, the president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA), resolved to encourage the NAWSA to boldly demonstrate their worthiness as patriotic American citizens through supportive war work while simultaneously continuing their responsibilities for achieving women's suffrage.[126] Many suffragists did not want to lose the energy of their movement at time of war, so they linked suffrage work to patriotic propaganda in service of winning the war. They were acutely aware of the publicity value for their cause.[127] The suffrage march in New York City on October 27, 1917, was a public opportunity to link suffrage with patriotism on a grand scale.

"Dr. Anna Shaw and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Leading the 20,000 women who marched for suffrage on Fifth Avenue a Week ago yesterday." [128]

[126] Trisha Franzen, *Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage* (University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2014), 167-168.
[127] Franzen, *Anna Howard Shaw*, 167.
[128] Article 5 -- no title, Rotogravure Picture Section, Times Photo Service, *New York Times*, November 4, 1917(55), ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99866600), (Photo and quote). http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/docview/99866600?accountid=15141.

The October event consisted of 20,000 women marching down Fifth Avenue led by two prominent suffragists, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt.[129] Shaw was the Honorary President of the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and President Wilson's handpicked choice for the chair of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense (Woman's Committee).[130] Catt, the president of the NAWSA, also served in several areas of the Woman's Committee, including chair of its Patriotic Service Education Branch.[131]



"The Service Flag in the Service Division, in which marched hundreds of wives, sister, and daughters of soldiers and sailors."[132]

[129] "20,000 March in Suffrage Line: President's Indorsement on Banners Carried in Fifth Avenue Parade. 500 Men in the Ranks Women of all Ages Join in the Demonstration, Many Carrying Service Flags. Quote Wilson's Words," *New York Times,* October 28, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99831475).
[130] Ida Clarke, *American Women,* 17-18.
[131] Ida Clarke, *American Women*, 17, 95, 103.
[132] "Country First is Keynote of Suffragists," *New York Tribune*, October 28, 1917, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1917-10-28/ed-2/seq-8/ (accessed January 8, 2018).

Viewed by thousands crowded on "both sides of the avenue from Washington Square to Fifty-Ninth Street" the Great Suffrage Parade, with its distinctive units and new themes related to war, took place seven months after America entered the war.[133] The fifth division of the march, one of the new additions, highlighted the theme of women and their patriotic war service by including hundreds of women "carrying service flags of one, two, three, or four stars."[134] This visual of women marching while waving service flags represented tangible evidence that their sons, husbands, and brothers were in "their country's service" and these women were ready to sacrifice their loved ones for the cause of the war. [135]

The *New York Times* declared the display of waving service flags "stirred the people to greatest applause."[136] Before this march, the service flag, already a popular symbol easily recognized by its red borders, white center, and blue star, reflected a family's patriotism. The flag's national recognition and its community endorsement made it ripe for political opportunism. At the time of Great Suffrage Parade, the debate about the color of the star on the service flag had not yet occurred. After the first casualty lists

[133] "Country First Keynote," October 28, 1917; "20,000 March in Suffrage Line," *New York Times,* October, 28, 1917.
[134] "20,000 March in Suffrage Line," *New York Times,* October, 28, 1917; "Country First is Keynote," October 28, 1917.
[135] "20,000 March in Suffrage Line," *New York Times,* October 28, 1917; "Country First is Keynote," October 28, 1917.
[136] "20,000 March in Suffrage Line," *New York Times,* October, 28, 1917.

arrived in the fall of that year, the debate began with a flurry of suggestions, passions, and government interest.[137]

Army Captain R. L. Queisser of Cleveland, Ohio first introduced the service flag in the spring 1917 after America entered the war.[138] Queisser had two sons in the Guard at the time anticipating orders for deployment to Europe. His original intent was to create "some design or symbol by which it might be known that they [his sons] were away in their country's service, and which would be to their mother a visible sign of the sacrifice her sons were making."[139] Within just six months copies of Queisser's flag design became visible hanging not only on the homes of service men from Queisser's home state of Ohio, but on the houses and businesses of surrounding states as well. The New York based Methodist Book Concern Company displayed fourteen stars on a single flag representing the men from that business who were now in war service. [140] On September 24, 1917, Henry I. Emerson, a U.S. Representative from Ohio, presented an argument to the United States Congress suggesting the government give a flag to every family with a member in war service citing "on my house in Cleveland hangs a service flag."[141]

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[137] "American Soldiers Killed: War Department Issues First Casualty List from the French Front," *The Daily Star-Mirror* (Moscow, Idaho), November 5, 1917, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89055128/1917-11-05/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed February, 23, 2020);"The First Casualty List," *The Lakeland Evening Telegram,* (Lakeland, Florida), November13, 1917, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn95047222/1917-11-13/ed-1/seq-2/, (accessed February 23, 2020).

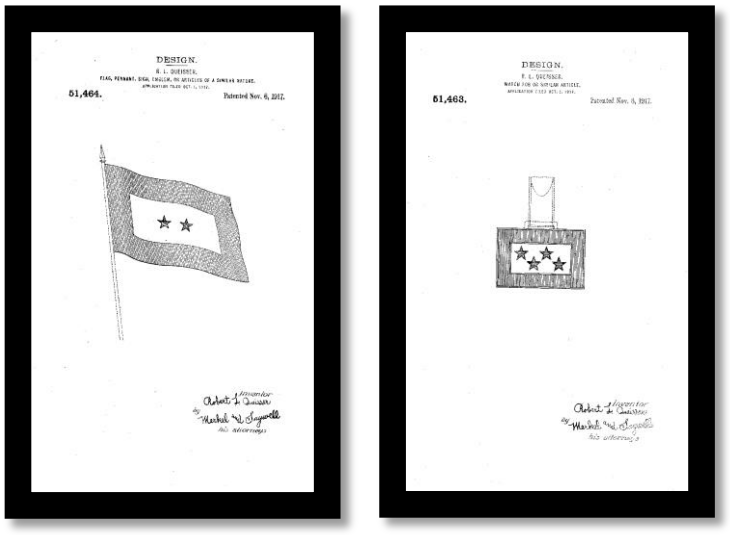
[138] "Explains Patent on Flag: Designer Says Half of Royalty Goes to Red Cross," *New York Times,* November 23, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99842509).

[139] "The History of the Service Flag," *Outlook*, vol. 117, Dec 26, 1918, 668, ProQuest American Periodicals, http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/docview/137010927?accountid=15141 (accessed June 15, 2018).

[140] "The History of the Service," *Outlook*, 668; Arthur F. Stevens, Letter to the Editor, "Service Flag Out Early," *New York Times,* Oct 07, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (98095299).

[141] U.S. Government Publishing Office, "Service Flag," GovInfo, 55 Cong. Rec. (Bound) - September 24, 1917, Volume 55, Part 7 (August 30, 1917 to October 1, 1917), 7385-7386.

Emerson supported his argument by stating the service flag had already "been adopted by Hon. Harry T. Davis, mayor of Cleveland, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, East Cleveland City Council, and by the governor of Ohio."[142]



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The popularity of Queisser's service flag design grew as families made their own and businesses reproduced it for profit without any restrictions from spring to early fall of 1917. Queisser petitioned for two patents on October 1, 1917 which included not only the service flag, but also a "watch-fob service flag design."[144] Both patented items contained verbiage citing "articles of a similar nature," such as "pennant, sign, (or) emblem" and

https://www.govinfo.gov/app/search/%7B%22query%22%3A%22September%2024%2C1917%22%2C%22offset%22%3A0%7D (accessed March 4, 2020).

[142] U.S. Government Publishing Office, 55 Cong. Rec. (Bound) - September 24, 1917.

[143]Robert L. Queisser, of east Cleveland, Ohio, United States, 'Design for a Flag, Pennant,' Sign, Emblem, or Articles of a Similar Nature, 1917, Patent 51463, filed October 1, 1917, UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE, Google Patents, https://patents.google.com/patent/USD51463S/en (accessed March 4, 2020); Robert L. Queisser, of east Cleveland, Ohio, United States, 'Design for a Flag, Pennant, Sign, Emblem, or Articles of a Similar Nature,' 1917, Patent 51464, filed October 1, 1917, UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE, Google Patents, https://patents.google.com/patent/USD51464S/en (accessed March 4, 2020).

[144] Queisser, Design for a Flag, Patent 51464; Queisser, Design for a Flag, Patent 51463.

"stick pins, buttons, or brooches" like the flag or watch fob, were legally restricted.[145] The patents, granted on November 6, 1917, allowed Queisser to protect his designs and to receive a royalty of ten cents per service flag sold.[146]

A firm in Brattleboro, Vermont wrote an editorial to the *New York Times* arguing, "Our firm has been selling service flags for some time. Today our manufacturers write us that they have just been advised that there is a patent on the United States service flag…We are astonished to learn that this flag, adopted by the Government, recommended by the President, and sold mostly to mothers whose sons are in the services, should be the private monopoly of some individual."[147] Within two days, another article appeared in the *New York Times* under the title, "Service Flags Unofficial: Design Not Approved by President Wilson or Government."[148] This article revealed Queisser had meet with the Secretary of War, Newton Baker, who after reviewing the design, "probably had expressed himself as liking it, but there had been no official indorsement by himself or the War Department."[149] Ironically, according to the article, Secretary Baker had commissioned the production of a similar service flag to represent the three hundred sixty-five "civilian employees of the War Department who had entered military service," but Queisser's patent created a legal issue concerning infringement.

[145] Queisser, Design for a Flag, Patent 51464; Queisser, Design for a Flag, Patent 51463.
[146] "Patent Monopoly on Service Flag: Cleveland Man Got Grant and Is Collecting Ten Cents Royalty from the Public," *New York Times,* November 22, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (98062562).
[147] "Patent Monopoly," November 22, 1917.
[148] "Service Flags Unofficial: Design Not Approved by President Wilson or Government," *New York Times,* November 25, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99852665).
[149] "Service Flags Unofficial," November 25, 1917.

Discussion of the patent persisted as voices continued to raise concerns over the service flag's private ownership into late December 1917. The *Outlook* magazine argued, "A continuance of the present private monopoly of the flag which means so much to America ought not to be tolerated."[150] The author of the article was so impassioned he made changes in the spelling of the words *service flag* by capitalizing the flag's name thus declaring it a proper noun and giving it a place of distinction. Queisser, in defense of his patents for the designs, pledged half of his royalties to the Red Cross.[151] Queisser also suggested the patent provided a precautionary measure to assist in preventing "irresponsible flag-making companies 'from making' undue profits from the sale of a flag for which there was destined to be such tremendous demand."[152]

During the patent deliberations, the average American pondered a more personal issue involving the service flag already displayed on their home. The daily growing causality lists clearly indicated the blue star of the service flag was not adequate to reflect the death of a family member due to war service. Letters began to appear in newspaper editorials and articles across the country with suggestions including red, black, or gold to replace the blue star, or small white stars on the red border to indicate the loss.[153]

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[150] "The History of the Service Flag," *Outlook*, 668.
[151] "The History of the Service Flag," *Outlook*, 668.
[152] "Explains Patent on Flag," *New York Times,* November 23, 1917.
[153] Letter to the Editor, "Red Stars, not Black," *New York Times,* December 29, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (98117902); J.M. Hunter, Letter to the Editor, "Blue, Red, and Gold Stars," *New York Times,* January 6, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99977309); "The Service Flag: Various Suggestions by Readers for Completing its Record of Heroism," *New-York Tribune,*(New York, New York), November 27, 1917, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1917-11-27/ed-1/seq-8/ (accessed March 4, 2020).

After June 1918 newspapers across the nation published tentative but not official approval from Washington concerning the service flag and acceptable star colors under headings such as "Service Flag Regulations: No Official Rules, But This Plan Has the Approval of the Adjutant General of the Army". [154] These articles, based upon the three page report, "The Origin, Design and Proper Display of the Service Flag; Persons Entitled to Representation and Meaning of Stars," by Judge Advocate General Nathan William MacChesney and published in the *Official Bulletin* on May 25, 1918, provided the government's definition of gold star deaths.[155]

The *Official Bulletin,* "the first official daily newspaper of the United States government," was under the control of the Committee on Public Information (CPI).[156] President Wilson created the CPI just one week after America's declaration of war. He named George Creel, an investigative journalist, politician, and an avid supporter of Wilson, the director of the CPI. The purpose of the *Official Bulletin* was to provide articles to the nation's newspapers informing the American citizenry about their country's purpose, place, and activities in the war. The use of and dependence on this government-sanctioned information by local and national news outlets during the war,

[154] "Service Flag Regulations: No Official Rules, But This Plan Has the Approval of the Adjutant General of the Army," *The Adair County News* (Columbia, Kentucky), August 14, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86069496/1918-08-14/ed-1/seq-6/ (accessed March 5, 2020).
[155] Brig. Gen. Nathan William MacChesney, "The Origin, Design and Proper Display of the Service Flag; Persons Entitled to Representation and Meaning of Stars," *Official Bulletin*, May 25, 1918 V 2.2, 654, HathiTrust Digital Library, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175006859725&view=1up&seq=654 (accessed March 4, 2020).
[156] Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda* (New York, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 92.

was seen by historians and others as propaganda. The media were practicing "volunteer censorship."[157]

After the war, Creel argued the CPI was "called into existence to make this fight for the 'verdict of mankind,' before the jury of Public Opinion...In no degree was the Committee an agency of censorship, a machinery of concealment or repression. Its emphasis throughout was on the open and the positive. At no point did it seek or exercise authorities under those war laws that limited the freedom of speech and press… [it was] the world's greatest adventure in advertising."[158] According to modern day historian, Alan Axelrod, the CPI "controlled virtually every scrap of information America and much of the rest of the world received concerning the war."[159] It was through this vehicle of government controlled information that the gold star emerged as a political product.

The CPI's publication the *Official Bulletin*, began as an eight-page paper, but quickly grew to thirty-two in order to keep pace with the growing list of American casualties and information to fuel or define patriotism.[160] This information, swiftly transformed into local newspaper articles, verbal platforms, and visual works, projected government recommendations for organizations, businesses, and individual contributions to the war effort.[161] One example of a government sanctioned suggestion for an

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[157]Dan Nimmo and Chevelle Newsome, *Political Commentators in the United States in the 20th Century: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, "George (Edward) Creel," (Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1997), 64.
[158] George Creel, *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information that Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe*, (Harper & Brothers Publishers New York and London, 1920), 4.
[159] Axelrod, *Selling the Great War,* xi preface.
[160] Thomas Flemming, *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I*, (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 118-119.
[161] Axelrod, *Selling the Great War,* xi preface.

individual involved figurative representation on the popular service flag. The advertisement, under the heading of *Pay-Your-Income-Tax-Campaign- Slogans,* stated, "Your income tax receipt is your star on the Nation's service flag," promoting that every adult, regardless of age or sex, had the opportunity to contribute to the war effort.[162] This suggestion, authorized by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and distributed to "every newspaper, post office, government office, and military base …as well as to government agencies, military camps and the nation's 50,000 post offices," appeared first in the *Official Bulletin*.[163]

General MacChesney's article, "The Origin, Design and Proper Display of the Service Flag; Persons Entitled to Representation and Meaning of Stars," originally published in the *Official Bulletin*, detailed the proper use of the service flag and the appropriate colors for the stars. The article began with the words "In response to many inquiries with reference to the service flag, its origin and established usage, the following memorandum has been prepared from the best available information-not as an official authoritative statement."[164] However, as all other articles printed in the *Official Bulletin*, it came with an official visual reminder printed on the first page of each edition in bold capital lettering, "PUBLISHED DAILY under order of THE PRESIDENT of THE UNITED STATES by COMMITTEE on PUBLIC INFORMATION."[165]

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[162] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, May 25, 1918, 654.
[163] Flemming, *The Illusion of Victory*, 118-119.
[164] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 654.
[165] United States Committee on Public Information, *Official Bulletin*, May 25, 1918, (Washington, D.C.: Committee on Public Information, 19171918), 643, HathiTrust Digital Library, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175006859725;view=1up;seq=643 (accessed March 4, 2020).

Prior to MacChesney's report the gold star symbol, already embraced and defined at the grassroots level by way of posters, poems, and music, as well as by families, schools, businesses, and churches, emphasized the popularity of the service flag. Families, organizations, and businesses with loved ones, members, or employees serving in any capacity for the war cause, but not necessarily overseas or on the battlefields, displayed the service flag with the gold star, demonstrating the population's definition of a gold star death in total war. MacChesney's article implied a misunderstanding by the general population of the government's stance on the service flag and the star colors, regardless of the earlier news article published in November 1917 titled, "Service Flags Unofficial: Design Not Approved by President Wilson or Government."[166] MacChesney's article also established the government's need to define and maintain a hierarchy of citizen deaths in relationship to war, gender, and race.

The first part the article defined the term "man" in "active military service," as "a person, whether male or female" who is "enlisted, enrolled or drafted into active service in the military or naval forces of the United States."[167] The General went on to emphasis women "performing active service in any of the foregoing branches" and a narrowly defined group of civilian employees, also assigned to service with those branches overseas, should be "accorded the honor of representation on the service flag" by way of a blue star.[168] Representation by the blue star did not extend to those not yet called into

[166] "Service Flags Unofficial," November, 25, 1917.
[167] "Service Flags: Rulings," Jun 02, 1918; MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 654.
[168] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 654.

active duty, such as reservists or patriotic services including, but not limited to, the Selective Service, Red Cross, or the Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Associations).[169]

Blue star recognition of service was inclusive of a wider range of people working on the war effort. However, the definition of "honor and glory accorded the person for his supreme sacrifice in offering up for his country on the battlefield his 'last full measure of devotion,' " recognized by the highest symbol of the gold star alone, was reserved for men and excluded many American minorities. Types of service and gendered language began to creep into the details of the unofficial gold star definition recommended by the government to indicate a death of "honor and glory." [170] The star colors defined by MacChesney were gold for those killed in active military service and silver for wounds due to battle or "injury or disease incurred in the line of duty."[171] Yet, precise details encoded with prejudice surrounded the gold and silver stars creating an intricate hierarchy of death.

The rules governing the use of service flags and its stars were intricate. A gold star entirely covering the blue star indicated a battlefield death and if a soldier succumbed to his battlefield wounds, a gold star completely covered a silver star.[172] However, the silver star of injury or disease placed over the blue star required a clear outline of the blue star beneath it to be visible from a distance, thus distinguishing this military person as not wounded on the battlefield.[173] If this person died, a gold star placed over only the silver

[169] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 654.
[170] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 655-656.
[171] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin* , 655-656
[172] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin* , 655-656
[173] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 656.

star to still leave visible the outline of the blue star underneath in order to distinguish this death as not battlefield related.[174] MacChesney stated the purpose for such details included "enable[ing] anyone observing it to read the message of the flag, which, without being unduly complicated, will show clearly whether the person represented was wounded or killed in action, died of wounds or of disease or injury."[175] MacChesney characterized these rules as "unofficial," but they laid the groundwork for an official hierarchy of citizen wartime deaths resulting in the ultimate patriot, a man killed on the battlefield, and in time, the ultimate female patriot; she who gave birth to a soldier. Newspapers began publishing information about the stars and their meanings under titles about rules or regulations on the service flag within days after MacChesney's article appeared in the *Official Bulletin*.

Just a few days before the public began reading the service flag regulation articles, another article of interest to families with military members serving overseas appeared entitled, "President Approves War Mourning Bands: Letter to Women's Committee Commends Wearing of Simple Badges of Loss".[176] The letter allowed President Wilson to promote the widespread use of mourning bands to make loss of life glorious, diverting attention from large military losses. This letter is one of five which laid the groundwork to change the way women mourn their military dead.

[174] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 655-656.
[175] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 656.
[176] "President Approves War Mourning Bands: Letter to Women's Committee Commends the Wearing of Simple Badges of Loss," *New York Times,* May 26, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100292526).

Less than six weeks after the publication of MacChesney's article the *New York Times* published "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning." Shaw's words directed to women, the most visible public mourners, rationalized the use of the black armband with a gold star over traditional mourning garments by stating:

> We should look on the insignia, therefore, not as a badge of mourning, but as a mark of recognition of exalted service, as a sign of what it has been their (soldiers) privilege to give to their country-a badge of honor. The wearing of the insignia will express far better than mourning the sacrifice that has been made, that the loss is a matter of glory rather than one of prostrating grief and depression.[177]

Shaw was not alone in shifting the grassroots' gold star symbol from a combined visual representation of glory and sorrow to one of only glory. Shaw stood on firm ground in her defense of the new symbol of mourning because of Wilson's public approval as stated in the article, and privately, through the written correspondence she had previously exchanged with the president on the subject. Their correspondence constituted the first step in constructing a political networking system to remove public signs of mourning over a soldier's war death. The Woman's Committee's official involvement with changing social mourning practices began with five letters exchanged during May 1918, the same time frame in which MacChesney finalized his detailed article about the service flag. The letter writers were Mrs. Caroline Read, President

[177] "Insignia," *New York Times*, July 7, 1918.

Woodrow Wilson, and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw. Read was a prominent private citizen, Shaw a leader of progressive women's groups, and of course the president was the most influential member of the government.

Mrs. Caroline Read, the widow of a prominent New York banker, wrote the initial letter to Wilson on May 3, 1918, two months after the death of her son, a naval aviator in France.[178] During the letter's opening paragraph, Mrs. Read invoked her personal friendship with Mrs. Henry P. Davison, the wife of Wilson's Red Cross War Chairman, Henry P. Davison. This introduction served as an explanation concerning Mrs. Read's access, through Mrs. Davison, to Wilson's discussions involving American women's attitudes towards the "inevitable death roll."[179] The great losses suffered by the warring nations prior to America's entrance into the war were predictive of a frightening death toll for the United States' forces. As Mrs. Read wrote her letter, national and local American newspapers that once printed horror stories of devastating battles and huge military losses by foreign countries, now reported accounts of American war activities and American causality lists. The purpose of Mrs. Read's letter was to request of the President consideration for the creation of a special badge of honor to identify the families of the fallen:

> Could we have awarded by our President… a badge of honor to wear, showing only the gold star with the rank and branch of service of our man, gladly dedicated

[178] "Curtis Read is Killed: Naval Aviator Dies in Service in France," *New York Times,* March 1, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99982758).
[179] Arthur S. Link, ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 48.

to his country's service in the Great Cause, we should not dare to mourn, lest those seeing our insignia and knowing that supreme sacrifice, might think we felt it a precious life thrown away.[180]

Mrs. Read carefully appeals to the President's need for national unity to justify the war in a single sentence:

In every home in this wide land is now a service flag, or explanations for the embarassing *[sic]* lack of one, and nothing could so unite our nation now as the President's word of understanding that our forces are composed of individuals each the central object of intense love, pride, and high hope and costly sacrifice."[181]

Mrs. Read's letter absolves President Wilson of the nation's loss in military life for her words imply mourning a military death was shameful because such a death could not be in vain.

This initial letter was the result of private networking between two privileged women leading to a personal letter of supplication to the president, which will have long-term public ramifications. Read requested the distinction of rank on the badge of honor. Ultimately, the Woman's Committee decides to make it more generic through the black armband with a gold star. The government, through MacChesney's article, individualizes the badge not by rank, but type of death, a battlefield death is required to obtain the ultimate honor of a gold star without a blue or silver edging.

[180] Link, ed. *The Papers, 48.*
[181] Lind, ed. The Papers, 46.

The second letter, written by the president on 16 May to Shaw, requested her assistance in this issue. Wilson skillfully acknowledges "it would not be wise for me to make any public utterance in this delicate matter" for it would "seem to be conveying a warning that mourning might present become universal amongst us."[182] Wilson could not have chosen a more respected or well-connected spokesperson among suffragists and national women's leagues alike than Shaw. In her characteristic way she did not waste any time fulfilling this request, for in her pursuit of gaining the vote for women's war work, this task was just another fragment of the bargain between the leading suffragists and the president.

The third letter was Shaw's quick response to Wilson's request for assistance. The Woman's Committee suggestion was that of a substitute for mourning, "a badge of honor" in the form of "a three-inch black band, upon which a gilt star may be placed for each member of the family whose life is lost in the service," worn on the left arm.[183] Absent from the third letter, but socially understood, are women's roles in public mourning since the Woman's Committee's main purpose was that of a clearinghouse for proposals involving women's work towards the war effort.

Wilson responded to Mrs. Read in the fourth letter of the networking chain to assure her he was carefully considering her request by "consulting in the matter the committee of women which is associated with the Council of National Defense," thus effectively defecting the political issue and its solution to the domain of women.[184] The fifth letter is

[182] Link, ed. *The Papers, 46.*
[183] Link, ed. *The Papers,*117.
[184] Link, ed. *The Paper*, 117.

the president's final response and approval on the subject to Shaw, "I hope that, you will be kind enough to make the suggestion of the Committee public with the statement that it has my cordial endorsement."[185] Within just a matter of days the *New York Times* and other local media carried the article "President Approves Mourning Band," first published in the *Official Bulletin* on May 25, 1918 under the title "Mourning Substitute for Those Dying in Service: President Endorses Idea of Wearing Black Band on Arm with Gilt Star for Each Member of Family Lost."[186] The black armband with a gold star was now official policy. Ending mourning over a military death was now women's work towards the war effort and fell under the auspices of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense.

[185] Link, ed. *The Paper,* 117.

[186] "President Approves," *New York Times,* May 26, 1918; "Mourning Substitute for Those Dying in Service: President Endorses Idea of Wearing Black Band on Arm with Gilt Star for Each Member of Family Lost," *Official Bulletin*, May 25, 1918, V 2.2, 266, HathiTrust Digital Library, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175006859725&view=1up&seq=644 (accessed March 4, 2020).

VII. IMPLICATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The creation of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense (Woman's Committee) occurred on April 12, 1917, just days after the United States declared war on Germany. The Woman's Committee's main task was to be a clearinghouse for the government concerning all information aimed at women and their contributions during wartime. The structure of the Woman's Committee included a national branch housed in Washington D.C., supported by state branches, and local community groups. The national branch, chaired by Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and her core committee, comprised of several leading women of the Progressive Era, included such names as Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Miss Judy Lathrop, Chief of the Children's Bureau, and Ida M. Tarbell, a notable publicist and writer. These women, along with hundreds of other women leaders, had the potential for a pronounced influence over a vast number of women nationwide.

The national structure of the Woman's Committee included presidents from seventy-five national women's organizations such as the American Red Cross, the National Council of Jewish Women, the National League of Women Workers, the National Association of Colored Women, the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. The groups' enrollments carried membership numbers into the tens of thousands, an army of women hungry to validate women's standing in the national political scene varying from obtaining the vote to an opportunity of gaining entrance into the man's

world of job opportunities. It was an incredible gathering of organized women, political adversaries and allies alike, merging together to act as one even if their motives and goals differed.

Examples of this well-organized engine of information distribution is documented in primary resources such as Michigan's, *Honor Roll and Complete War History of Genesee County in the Great World War 1914 to 1918*, written by community members of Genesee County in 1920. This three hundred page record of community war activities dedicates twenty pages to the work of women, much of it directly attributed to the organizational skills and directives coming from the national Woman's Committee to the Woman's Committee state representative and then branching to the various women's groups in the counties, cities, townships, and school districts.[187]

Three months after the creation of the national Woman's Committee women such as Mrs. Carrie E. Berston of Flint, Michigan, supervised a regiment of female registrars who managed the recording of "every woman over 16 years of age willing to do war work" resulting in "12,000 separate registration cards collected, filed, and classified" for two hundred ninety-two districts.[188] Detailing and organizing relevant information relating to talents and skills of the women from the various districts for later use as the needs of numerous wartime activities became more apparent defined one of the hallmarks of the Woman's Committee's state organizations.

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[187] Genesee County War Board, *Honor Roll and Complete War History of Genesee County in the Great World War 1924 to 1918 (*Genesee County, Michigan*: Flint Daily Journal,* 1920); 68.
[188] Genesee County War Board, *Honor Roll,* 70.

Homefront war opportunities ranged from nursing skills to knitting skills, gardening to teaching, and fundraising to international awareness. This pattern of structure included not only personal support from the Woman's Committee, but also constant media support through written correspondence and publications as the headquarters in Washington sent to Genesee County alone " more than 400,000 pamphlets and bulletins."[189] The comprehensive registration cards collected for the Woman's Committee provided additional contacts to receive the government's message provided on pamphlets and bulletins. The Woman's Committee had some form of representation in all states, some more aggressive than others, but all had the strong support of Shaw and her trained legion of Progressive Era women leaders and organizations.

William J. Breen in his article "Black Women and the Great War: Mobilization and Reform in the South" points out such community work is a grassroots event, but unfortunately "(l)ittle is known about how national polices were implemented at the local level," especially among women and grievously less concerning minority women.[190] Breen's work demonstrates the aggressive labor put forth by the national Woman's Committee in recruiting all women to the war effort as they "maintained a constant, if

[189] Genesee County War Board, *Honor Roll,* 70.
[190] William J. Breen, "Black Women and the Great War: Mobilization and Reform in the South," The *Journal of Southern History,* 44, no. 3 (August, 1978): 421, footnote 1. JSTOR-PDF, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2208050 (accessed March 4, 2020).

discreet pressure on the southern states to integrate black women into the civilian war effort."[191]

A footnote from Breen's 1978 work declares, "The best contemporary accounts of the role of women in the war" are in the separate historical accounts of the Woman's Committee of the National Council of Defense published between 1918 and 1919 by Ida C. Clarke and Emily Blair.[192] Blair records in her work the role of the Woman's Committee in promoting the mourning armband to women as she writes, "There had been other suggestions on this subject, from the Commercial Economy Board, from individuals, to the council, and suggestions had also been made to Congress. But it was the Woman's Committee who suggested the adoption of the mourning brassard, a gold star on a black band" to replace women's traditional mourning attire over a military death.[193] Breen's assessment of the Woman's Committee's extensive grassroots work to involve women in the war effort combined with Blair's record of the committee's participation in advancing the mourning band for women examples the power of community networking to establish a new mode of mourning.

The detailed article of July 1918, "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning," served as the public argument marketed as a patriotic suggestion and "laid directly before the women of the country" by the well-organized Woman's Committee.[194] Through the networking of the various women's organizations collaborating with the Woman's

[191] Breen, "Black Women,"422.
[192] Breen, "Black Women," 421, Footnote 1.
[193] Emily Newell Blair, *The Woman's Committee: United States Council of National Defense: An Interpretative Report : April 21,1917, to February 27, 1919, (*Government Printing Office, 1920), 91.
[194] "President Approves," May 26, 1918; "Insignia," July 7, 1918.

Committee and the Woman's Committee's own subcommittees in the cities and grassroots communities of local counties, the news "that loss is a matter of glory rather than one of prostrating grief and depression" was skillfully spread.[195] About two months after the publication of the article the Woman's Committee and the Red Cross publically announced their coordinating efforts to produce and distribute the black bands of honor at the beginning of September 1918.[196]

Henry P. Davison, Jr. was the Chairman of the Red Cross War Committee and the husband of Mrs. Davison referred to in the initial letter. He partnered local Red Cross units with the Woman's Committee in the endeavor to change mourning by providing free, readymade armbands with gold stars to deserving parents and widows while allowing "other near relatives" to purchase the bands for sixty-five cents or the cost of the government to produce them.[197] There was little information provided in the early newspaper articles concerning the proper identification of widows, parents, or other relatives in regards to obtaining a Red Cross mourning brassard. Yet, words such as distribution, application, and presentation describing the process imply the Red Cross, in

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[195] "President Approves," May 26, 1918.

[196] "Brassards to be Worn for the Dead," *Evening Capital and Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, Maryland), September 3, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88065726/1918-09-03/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed March 4, 2020).
"Mourning Brassards for Dead Heroes' Kin," *Evening Star,* (Washington, D.C.), September 1, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1918-09-01/ed-1/seq-6/, (accessed February 29, 2020); "Will Supply Brassards: Red Cross to Furnish Mourning Insignia for Soldiers' Relatives," *New York Times,* September 1, 1918*,* ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100115600); "News in Notes: All American,*" The Abbeville Press and Banner,* (Abbeville, Sought Carolina), September 6, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026853/1918-09-06/ed-1/seq-4/, (accessed February 4, 2019).

[197] "Brassards to be Given to the Relatives of Soldier Boys Lost in the Great Conflict," *The Ogden Standard* (Ogden City, Utah), November 5, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85058396/1918-11-05/ed-1/seq-6/, (accessed February 25, 2020).

conjunction with the Woman's Committee, obtained some official form of identification or application to justify a person's entitlement to a band and the corresponding expenditures to the government. The government's 'official' requirement for such documentation soon followed.

Despite Shaw's original reasoning that the " band could be made at home" to replace traditional mourning attire in the July 1918 article "Insignia, Not Black Gowns, as War Mourning," the government through the Red Cross in conjunction with the Woman's Committee sought to end personal control over who was eligible for the gold star honor.[198] A Utah paper published in November 1918 that "The names of those wearing [the armband] must be sent to headquarters and an accounting made of each brassard. The bands or brassards must be ordered through the local Red Cross and no one is allowed to make their own brassards."[199] Other local newspapers recognized the free pre-made brassards available to a select group of relatives as "a sympathetic service" rendered by the Red Cross and mentioned homemade bands as acceptable. One paper, *The Watertown News*, reported that aside from the sympathetic aspect of the Red Cross in furnishing the armbands it was also a way "to protect the insignia from ever being commercialized," while making " it possible to keep the brassards uniform in appearance and facilitate the general adoption of

[198] "Insignia," July 7, 1918.
[199] "Brassards to be Given," November 5, 1918.

it as a substitute for mourning garb."[200] Many newspapers emphasized that the armband, free or homemade, was a substitute for traditional mourning attire.[201]

An advertisement introducing new fashion wear for mourning featuring the gold star armband appeared in local newspapers across the nation during the months of August and September 1918. The title of the article, "Wear Gold Star Abandon Crepe?," not only ask a rhetorical question about the mode of correct public mourning, but answered it as well with a telling response:

> "This manner of dressing is aided and abetted by our government, which hopes that women will not discard the clothes they have in order to buy costly and sometimes large wardrobes of crepe and other mourning habiliments. It feels that the whole nation grieves for itself and for others: that each woman's woe is echoed in another woman's heart, that anxiety is universal. Therefore, it is not necessary for a woman who has lost a man in battle to go to the extreme length of draping herself in crepe, so that her face is invisible and her body weighted down with heavy and unusual fabrics."[202]

The words of this article target women only, while acknowledging the effort of the government to change the approach of public mourning for the death of a soldier killed in

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[200] "Red Cross to Furnish Gold Star Brassards," *The Watertown News*, (Watertown Wisconsin), October 09, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85040720/1918-10-09/ed-1/seq-3/ (accessed February 25, 2020).

[201] "A Gift of the Red Cross," *Edgefield Advisor*, (Edgefield, South Carolina), November 20, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026897/1918-11-20/ed-1/seq-8/ (accessed February 24, 2020).

[202] "Gold Star Abandon Crepe?" *The Jasper News,* (Jasper, Missouri), August 22, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn90061052/1918-08-22/ed-1/seq-9/ (accessed February 23, 2020).

action. The concern for women's health during mourning mentions only men lost in battle, but does not suggest such a band with a gold star for other war related deaths. Nor does it appeal to those in mourning over the deaths of relatives not related to war, suggesting traditional mourning is still appropriate concerning civilian deaths. Giving an official status to the article an outlined text box containing the fifth letter written by President Wilson to Shaw in their correspondence about the new insignia reinforces his approval and endorsement.

At the left is an all-white costume with a tiny touch of black on the sleeve. The coat is of broadcloth, with wide collar and cuffs of angora. The skirt is of plaited jersey cloth. At the right is a costume of cashmere and faille combined. The vest is of faille, and fastens high in the neck with a narrow turnover of organdie. Folds of the cashmere trim the coat. A hat of faille, draped with chiffon, and suede pumps finish this smart costume.

203

There are other theories about the change in mourning and the gold star during World War I. John W. Graham defends Wilson's actions concerning the new form of public mourning through the gold star armband in his work, *The Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages*

[203] "Gold Star Abandon Crepe?" Illustration, *Crossville Chronicle,* (Crossville, Tennessee), September 25, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042757/1918-09-25/ed-1/seq-7/ (accessed May 17, 2018).

of the 1930s: Overseas Grave Visitations, but he also acknowledges "[s]ome view Wilson's efforts with a bit of cynicism. His behind-the-scenes approach strikes many as a bit too calculated," evidenced to the point of "a very deliberate conscious effort to change mourning practices."[204]

Graham implies that the history of the gold star as a substitution for "the black garb of mourning" first began with a *New York Times* article about a "group of Illinois families".[205] The article, "Gold Star as Mourning, Chicago Movement to Abolish Black Grab for Death of Soldiers," printed on November 12, 1917, came nine months prior to correspondence between Wilson and Shaw on the subject and eight months before the July 1918 article about the new mourning insignia.

The article quotes Mrs. Louise De Koven Bowen, Chairman of the Woman's Committee of the State Council of National Defense in Illinois, as saying "The psychological effect of multitudes in mourning is not good. Soldiers do not like it and Germany forbids it…It is not too early to consider this subject now." [206] One month later, after receiving a deluge of letters about the impropriate use a gold star for mourning because it represented other associations, Mrs. Bowen explained in a Chicago newspaper, "The truth is that I never made any such statement [about a gold star]."[207] She went on to clarify that "What I did say was that the glory rather than the sadness of death should be

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[204] John W. *Graham, The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s: Overseas Grave Visitations by Mothers and Widows of Fallen U.S. World War I Soldiers (*Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2005), 12-13.
[205] Graham, *The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s,* 12-13.
[206] "Gold Star As Mourning: Chicago Movement to Abolish Black Garb for Death of Soldiers," *New York Times,* November 13, 1917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99831562).
[207] "Mrs. Bowen Urges Women Not to Wear Black," *The Broad Ax,* (Salt Lake City, Utah), December 15, 1917, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024055/1917-12-15/ed-1/seq-2/, (accessed February 29, 2020).

emphasized…I also advocated the wearing of some kind of mourning badge, such as a black band on the left arm or a black rosette with a tiny United State flag…I am asking this correction to be made in the newspapers because I have been misquoted all over the country from New York to San Francisco."[208] Mrs. Bowen did however emphasize the depression that soldiers might experience by women wearing black and the economics surrounding production of mourning garments during war.

Mrs. Bowen was eventually required to promote the gold star on a black armband as a substitution for women's traditional mourning garments in her capacity as the Illinois Chairman of the Woman's Committee. Such actions fulfilled one of the vital purposes of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense in its capacity as the "new and direct channel of communication and cooperation between women and governmental departments."[209] The article, "What Can We Do?" published in local newspapers, describes the partnership of the Red Cross and the Woman's Committee by stating "[t]he brassards will be made and distributed by the chapters of the Red Cross working in conjunction with local units of the woman's committee of the council of national defense."[210] This article also places sole responsibly on women concerning the correct manner in which to mourn the fallen as it states:

> "In the matter of wearing mourning for relatives who have given their lives for their country there are two opinions one is that it is inadvisable to wear black

[208] "Mrs. Bowen Urges," *The Broad Ax,* December 15, 1917.
[209] Clarke, *American Women*, 19.
[210] "What Can We Do?" *Chicago Eagle,* (Chicago, Illinois), October 12, 1918, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84025828/1918-10-12/ed-1/seq-12/ (accessed May 7, 2020).

> because it depresses other people…The other is that a proper respect for the dead almost compels a period of mourning apparel. It is a matter which each one must think out for herself.[211]

Yet, even as the article seems to encourage women to make the decision about public mourning for themselves it ends with reminding them the armband with a gold star is a "badge of honor."

[211] "What Can We Do?" October 12, 1918.

VIII. THE HONOR OF A GOLD STAR DEATH: FEDERAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' DEFINITIONS DIFFER

During the all-consuming period of the war, a death represented by a gold star went beyond families to include friends and co-workers. Their embracing of the gold star, during and after the war, frequently reflected a community understanding of the ultimate sacrifice as broader than the government's definition, thus defying, in a public realm gender and minority exclusion to not only honor, but also glory. Understanding the gold star through the lens of the community reveals a subtle protest which embraced the gold star through a more inclusive definition while emphasizing the uniqueness of individual loss. However, this protest is a study in contradictions. The meticulous details hidden in the regulations controlling the use of the service flag and the stars embellishing it created fertile ground allowing racism and gender bias to flourish as the government sought to control women's public mourning over the fallen.

Communities tried to preserve their collective contributions to the war efforts by recording their citizens' military service, as individuals or groups, and the gold star deaths in honor books during the first few years after World War I. Such records typically included a short biography of the person with information about their war service, date of death, cause of death, rank or position, military rank or organizational position, and family members, especially the mothers, along with examples of the war service groups. Existing honor roll books from the Civil War combined with the directives from General

MacChesney's "The Roll of Honor," found in his article, "The Origin, Design and Proper Display of Service Flag," provided guidelines.[212]

Private John Hudson is on a page in the honor book of Sangamon County, Illinois. The honor book's record of the events surrounding Hudson's passing prove he fulfilled the government's definition of a gold star death with a blue border; he did not die on the battlefield. The other pages of Sangamon County's honor book reveal a wealth of material concerning the racial atmosphere of the county Hudson and his family called home.

Hudson, a twenty-nine year old African American, died of influenza-pneumonia while in basic training just one month after arriving in Camp Grant, Illinois on October 7, 1918.[213] His headstone is inscribed with the words, "Died in the Service of His Country."[214] Placed towards the end of the, *Sangamon County Honor Book,* in the section titled "Colored," is a picture and a short biography of Hudson and a picture of his mother titled, "Gold Star Mother, Mrs. Amanda Hudson."[215]

The *Sangamon County Honor Book* records, "nothing was spared to give them [African American troops] the 'Welcome' which their splendid record as fighters

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[212] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 656.

[213]Refer to the following for additional information about the flu and segregation at Camp Grant. Byerly, Carol R. "The U.S. military and the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919." *Public health reports (Washington, D.C.: 1974)* vol. 125 Suppl 3,Suppl 3 (2010): 82-91. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2862337/ (accessed June 16, 2018); Duff, *The Honor Book: Sangamon,* 1116.

[214] "Memorials – John E. Hudson," Find a Headstone, accessed March 1, 2020, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42993482/john-hudson (accessed June 16, 2018).

[215] Duff, *The Honor Book: Sangamon County*, 1116.

deserved."[216] Yet, everything from the African American troops' placement in the parade to the segregated "Coming Home Celebration" banquet, along with the racial segregation of service and tribute in the honor book testified to the embedded racial attitude of their county. The gold star, regardless of its blue shadow, may have brought comfort to the white population whose military service family member did not die on the battlefield, but for the African American families of military service members it was yet another detail in the history of American racism. Understanding the entrenchment of Jim Crow attitudes in every facet of national life, including community honor books and the treatment of black gold star mothers, one must begin with the everyday community events. Thomas C. Holt, author of "Marking: Race, Race-making, and the Writing of History," argues the history of racial prejudice is "part of the 'ordinary' events of everyday life and is perpetrated by 'ordinary' people."[217]

The ultimate sacrifice for African American gold star mothers, the loss of their loved one, by no means conferred on them the blessings of equality. The embedded attitude of white America towards the nation's black citizens tainted every aspect of military honor, related activities, rituals, and war history to the point that even in dying for one's country a black soldier could not escape the all-consuming shadow of racism nor could his gold star honor shield his loved ones from future racial discrimination.

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[216] Duff, *The Honor Book: Sangamon County*, 47- 49.

[217] Thomas C. Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-making, and the Writing of History," *The American Historical Review* 100, no.1 (1995): 3, accessed January 20, 2019, https://search-ebscohostcom.ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=reh&AN=ATLA0000893514&site=eds-live.

Lora Hanna Burden, Leslie Shelby, Hugh Stanley Lawwill, George Edgar Gregorie, and Grace Glenn Buell were all adult residents of Indiana prior to the war. All died between 1917 and 1920. Their communities honored their passing as gold star deaths, but none of them served in the military. The state of Indiana deemed it correct to include and honor these five Hoosiers and others like them as equals to the Indiana military service member who died in service by recording their deaths in the *Indiana World War Records: Gold Star Honor Roll*. Their gold star deaths and the honors bestowed upon their families spoke to a community's belief that serving the cause and dying during that service, stateside or on foreign fields, in whatever capacity, garnered gold star respect and the ultimate sacrifice during total war status was an issue of war service, not organizational ties.

Nurse Hanna Lora Burden, rejected by the Red Cross because of heart issues, died of pneumonia on October 26, 1918, after arriving at Camp Sherman, Ohio to assist during the influenza epidemic.[218] Leslie Shelby, [r]ejected for military service," died of pneumonia on September 27, 1918 after serving with the Young Mens' Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) at Great Lakes naval Training Base [219] Hugh Stanley Lawwell, a secretary for the Y.M.C.A., died from contracting influenza in Paris, France on November 13, 1918.[220] George Edgar Gregoire, a volunteer representing the Knights of

[218] *Indiana World War Records: Gold Star Honor Roll* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1921), 433.
[219] *Indiana World War Records*, 302.
[220] *Indiana World War Records*, 401.

Columbus for overseas duty, died of influenza in a New York hospital while attempting to secure his passport.[221]

MacChesney wrote, "The rules with reference to the roll of honor are essentially the same as those with reference to the service flag, since both have the same object in view."[222] Organizations such as the Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A, the Knights of Columbus, and " persons rendering service collaterally connected with, or of assistance to the military or navel service, but not part of it, should not be represented on the service flag" or by its stars.[223] MacChesney clarified the rolls of honor were also explicitly for those serving in the military, all others providing supportive service to the military should be placed "under some distinctive appropriate title, such as 'Patriotic Service' or under the particular work in which they are engaged," such as the Y.M.C.A.[224]

The members of the Indiana Historical Commission who paid tribute to Hanna Lora Burden and the others in their honor book were responsible for collecting the biographical materials, pictures, and daily causality lists from various sources. The *Official Bulletin* contributed significantly to the assembling of their honor roll project.[225] The members of the Commission knew deaths attached to persons outside of military service did not fit the government's definition of a gold star death, but they challenged that definition in their permanent record. The Indiana Historical Commission members capture the community definition of a gold star death with the words:

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[221] *Indiana World War Records*, 171.
[222] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 656.
[223] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 656.
[224] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 656.
[225] *Indiana War Records*, 10.

> "Thousands upon hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers in their daily vocations and in every civilian war activity, in training camp, and on the battle field, were striving for America in the great World War. Of this number, less than four thousand were called upon to sacrifice their lives. It is by way of tribute to these that this book has been created." [226]

As communities sought to comfort their grieving members through honor with the gold star, they grappled with the government's stance on discouraging public mourning over the fallen. Indiana's honor book, a public forum, records within the first few pages a statement written by a representative of the Executive Office to the families of fallen is entitled, "To the Gold Stars". One of the lines states, "I wish I were able to say that which is in my heart in tribute to these fallen heroes of ours, that I might in some way lighten the burden of those who mourn their loss."[227] Shaw's article, "Insignia, Not Black Gowns," mentions the word *mourn* regarding the families of the fallen as she states, "The wearing of the insignia (a black armband with a gold star) will express far better than mourning the sacrifice that has been made, that the loss is a matter of glory rather than one of prostrating grief and depression."[228]

Local communities were not the only units defining war related deaths as deserving of the gold star honor. Throughout the war, women's organizations, such as the Needlework Guild of America, honored members of their groups not only with a blue star on their group's service flag, but also honored those who lost their lives while doing

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[226] *Indiana War Records*, 8.
[227] *Indiana War Records*, 9.
[228] "Insignia," *New York Times*, July 7, 1918.

volunteer service overseas with a gold star. The Needlework Guild of America's war service included providing new clothing to "churches and charities" and they were in partnership with the Red Cross on other projects. [229]

During April 1918, the national Needlework Guild covered three blue stars with gold to recognize the sacrifice of Mrs. Edward H. Landon and her two grown daughters who were members of a local New York branch.[230] These women, while caring for a sick relative in France, worked with the Red Cross as French translators and at American hospitals. They died while attending a church service in Paris shelled by the German army.[231] The Needlework Guild honored their loss with gold stars in recognition of deaths while in the service of their county.

Four years after the war the Women's Overseas Service League, founded in 1921, provided the names of one hundred sixty-one women they believed deemed gold star status. The League expressed anger over a bronze tablet created to memorialize "the mules and horses who had died in the war," adding that "nowhere in Washington is there a record of women who had died-except army nurses-until we complied it."[232] On the

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[229] "Call for Needle Workers: National Guild Seeks Additional Membership of 100,000," 1918. *New York Times,* March 21, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100021918).
[230] "Service Flag for Needle Work Guild," *New York Times,* April 15, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100286882).
[231] "Tribute to Women Killed by Supergun: Mrs. London and Daughters, Murdered, in Paris Church by Germans, Honored Here," *New York Times,* April 15, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100241694); "Praises Cromwell Twins: Mrs. W.K. Vanderbilt Says Their Work in France was Remarkable," *New York Times*, January 30, 1919, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100320897).
[232] "Names of 161 Women Who Gave Lives in World War Made Public for First Time," *The Evening Herald*, (Klamath Falls, Oregon), November 11, 1922, From Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99063812/1922-11-11/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed June 29, 2015); "Praises Cromwell Twins: Mrs. W.K. Vanderbilt," *New York Times*, January 30, 1919.

League's list are the twin sisters, Dorothea and Gladys Cromwell, who both served as relief workers for the Red Cross in hospitals and canteens.[233] The Cromwell sisters' deaths were a result of suicide.[234] The sisters jumped from the ship taking them home after the war.[235]

Friends of Gladys' wrote an article for the1919 edition of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* entitled "A Gold Star for Gladys Crowell" in which they stated:

> The toll of our heroic soldier dead does not complete the list of those who have given their lives in the cause of liberty. The friends and fellow-artists of Gladys Cromwell may well display in her honor the service star of gold, tempering their grief for her untimely death with the thought of her service, even as though she had fallen in battle…Thus her fellow-poets of America are entitled to inscribe the name of Gladys Cromwell on their honor-book, just under those of Alan Seeger Joyce Kilmer and the other poet-heroes who died in battle. Like them she was not afraid of death, even though like them she felt to the finest fibers of her being the exquisite beauty of life.[236]

Gladys' community of friends and the Women's Overseas Service League wanted to recognize the suicide as a gold star death brought about by the emotional and mental wounds, or "shell-shock," resulting from the constant stress of Dorothea and Gladys' volunteer nursing services.[237]

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[233] Harriet Monroe, "A Gold Star for Gladys Cromwell" *Poetry* 13, no. 6 (1919): 327. JSTOR www.jstor.org/stable/20572055 (accessed February 27, 2020).
[234] "Names," *The Evening Herald*, 1922; Monroe, "A Gold Star for Gladys,"326-27.
[235] "Names," *The Evening Herald*, 1922.
[236] Monroe, "A Gold Star for Gladys," 326-327.
[237] Monroe, "A Gold Star for Gladys," 326.

Author Vivien Newman in her book, *We Also Serve: The Forgotten Women of the First World War*, suggest that due to the passengers' accounts of the sisters' on board behavior, combined with their previous work close to the front lines and their exhausting schedule, their symptoms "fit the syndromes of what is now understood as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)."[238] Although Newman does mention the article "A Gold Star for Gladys Crowell" in her work, she credit's the editor, not Gladys' community of friends and fellow-artists with the writing of the prose, thus, dismissing a community's understanding of a gold star death because of total war.

The gender issue of the gold star includes both the lack of mourning and the lack of recognition for women's war service. The Women's Overseas Service League included deaths of women serving, for example, as Red Cross Nurses and women working with the Y.M.C.A. The complexity of the gold star during the war, suggests women were not to publicly mourn a death related to military service, but allowed to mourn a death related to serving the country. A gold star honor would apply differently to a person who died doing the same job, such as a nurse, depending on the organization he or she worked for, either military or non-governmental. The value of the non-governmental death is weighed and found wanting in the regulations of the gold star.

[238] Vivian Newman, *We Also Serve: The Forgotten Women of the First World War* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2015), 154-155.

IX. USE OF MINORITY WOMEN'S PUBLIC GRIEF OVER WAR RELATED MILITARY DEATHS

During World War I as African American men served in the military, they and their families endured the hardships, inequities, and the degradation of discrimination by a nation which honored the theory of democracy, but scorned the practice concerning its black citizens. The common link shared by thousands of African American men, volunteers or conscripted, was racially segregated labor before and during their time in the service. Consequently, their military service was the equivalent of forced labor in the light of institutionalized prejudices. A history emphasizing racially segregated labor directly connected to the disproportionate number of African American males drafted with specific aims for placing them in military labor units.

Only ten percent of America's wartime population, including women and children, were African Americans, but fourteen percent of the draftees were black.[239] The total estimated number of African Americans in service by the end of the war represented 370,000.[240] Only ten percent of the total number of black soldiers were in fighting units.[241] Rebecca Jo Plant and Frances M. Clarke, authors of, "The Crowning Insult: Federal Segregation and the Gold Star Mother and Widow Pilgrimages of the Early 1930," state, "the vast majority of soldiers (almost 90 percent) were assigned to segregated stevedore and labor units where they faced appalling conditions and treatment.

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[239] Williams, Chad L. *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 54-55.
[240] Williams, "*Torchbearers of Democracy," 108.*
[241] Rebecca Jo Plant and Frances M. Clarke, "The Crowning Insult: Federal Segregation and the Gold Star Mother and Widow Pilgrimages of the Early 1930s," *Journal of American History* 102, no. 2 (September 2015): 411, accessed February 28, 2020, EBSCO, Doi:10.1093/jahist/jav351.

Indeed, it was mainly black troops who performed the 'gruesome, repulsive, and unhealthful' job of exhuming and reinterring bodies in the cemeteries now deemed pilgrimage sites."[242] Discussion of the word 'labor,' and its lack of the highest level of the gold star honor status as defined by General MacChesney, requires deeper study when such labor constitutes 'service to their country' for minority soldiers. This discussion is not complete if the change in publically mourning a soldier's death and the purpose for the creation of the gold star is absent.

MacChesney's article, "The Origin, Design and Proper Display of the Service Flag; Persons Entitled to Representation and Meaning of Stars," emphasized those who died while serving in labor units did not qualify for their blue star or silver stars to be completely covered with a gold star as that recognition applied only for "those killed in action."[243] Therefore, only the black soldiers in fighting units qualified for the highest gold star honor, thus the government's creation of a hierarchy of military deaths covertly enforced a hierarchy of race as well.[244] Honor for a black gold star mother was complex and wrapped in racial disparities. The embedded attitude of white America towards the nation's black citizens tainted every aspect of military honor.

In the midst of American's involvement in World War I the government initiated a request of grieving families for the relinquishment the bodies of their fallen service member for burial in foreign soil. The majority (70 percent) of the families representing

[242] Plant, "The Crowning Insult," 411.
[243] MacChesney, "The Origin," *Official Bulletin*, 656.
[244] "Service Flags: Rulings," *New York Times* June 2, 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (100065957).

the 116, 516 who died overseas demanded the return of their military dead.[245] The government assured "perpetual care and reverence" to those families who accepted the overseas cemeteries dedicated to the remains of their American warriors.[246] Twelve years after the war in an effort to pacify these families and in response to lobbying by Gold Star Mothers, Inc. about the issue, the government decided to fund trips for gold star mothers and widows to the cemeteries in Europe through a lottery.[247]

The lottery winners, mothers and widows, the only gold star family members eligible, received a gold medallion with a gold star embossed within a circle of laurels as a memento of the experience.[248] Approximately 6700 women made the journey referred to in newspapers as the Gold Star Mothers' Pilgrimages taking place between 1930 and 1933. This pilgrimage revealed another dynamic of Jim Crow history testifying to not only the dishonoring of American's minority women in connection to public mourning, but also the use of these same women, symbols of the ultimate female patriot in their government assigned roles as gold star mothers or wives, to obtain political goals for several political parties.

[245] Budreau, "Politics of Remembrance," 378; McElya, "The Politics of Mourning," 176; U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics.* RL32492 (2019), 2, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL32492.
[246] Budreau, "Bodies of War," 15.
[247] "Senate Passes Gold Star Trip Bill," *New York Times,* February 07, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (99067728).
[248] "Medals to Identify Gold Star Pilgrims: Badges Are Expected to Call Forth Special Courtesy to Women Going to France," *New York Times,* April 23, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (98722581).

The total number of women invited to participate in the pilgrimage was 6,700, but only 279 African American women attended.[249] According to the *New York Times'* article, "Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negroes," the trip to Europe included luxury liners for the white mothers and wives as their black sisters in grief traveled aboard commercial steamers as well as segregated itineraries and lodgings during the pilgrimage visits to Europe.[250] Fifty-five of the African American women invited, representing twenty-one states, declined the invitation for the pilgrimage by signing a petition initiated by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) summarizing white America's view of a black gold star mother's *ultimate sacrifice.*[251]

The petition explained that the African American mothers and wives who allowed the bodies of their sons and husbands to be buried in foreign soil believed the gesture would be their testimony that those lives were given so "that the world might be a better place in which to live for all men, of all races and all colors."[252] Instead, they suffered insult by the "implication that [they were] not fit persons" to travel with the white gold star mothers.[253] Standing by the ruling, the Acting Secretary of War F. Trubee Davison stated the racial grouping decision came "after the most careful consideration of the interests of the pilgrims themselves."[254] F. H. Payne, the assistant secretary of war

[249] "Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negroes: Secretary Davison Says Protest Will Not Alter Rule to Segregate Colored Mothers. He Denies Discrimination of Negro Women in Petition to Hoover Assert They Will Not Sail in "Jim Crow" Ships," *New York Times,* May 30, 1930*,* ProQuest Historical Newspapers, (98941111).
[250] "Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negroes," *New York Time*. May 30, 1930.
[251] "Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negroes," *New York Times*, May 30, 1930.
[252] "Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negroes," *New York Times,* May 30, 1930.
[253] "Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negroes," *New York Times*, May 30, 1930*.*
[254] "Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negroes," *New York Times*, May 30, 1930.

explained the segregation as only "natural to assume that these mothers and widows would prefer to seek solace in their grief from companions of their own race."[255]

The graves of minority soldiers artfully assimilated into the well-ordered and peaceful beauty of American World War I cemeteries, at home or overseas, daily reflect an image of equality in death regardless of one's class, ethnic origin, or religion. The equality represented by the cemeteries' serene elegance is misleading in the context of the gold star honor extended to the memory and the families of minority communities during World War I proving that even death is not enough in a racist culture.

The difficulties surrounding the black gold star mothers' of the pilgrimages involved the demands of political parties and their own communities ranging from forceful recommendations to personal attacks questioning their individual stand on racial solidarity. Historians Rebecca Jo Plant and Frances M. Clarke in their article, "The Crowning Insult: Federal Segregation and the Gold Star Mother and Widow Pilgrimages of the Early 1930s," identify the political use of these gold star mothers and wives in several areas and by opposing political parties. One group consisted of "well-educated and cosmopolitan newspapermen and NAACP activists outside the South [who] assumed the role of organizing and representing the gold star mothers and widows. Committed to

[255] F. H. Payne, assistant secretary of war, to Mrs. M. E. Mallette, president, Keith Home Improvement Association, n.d., file "Colored Mothers and Widows," Pilgrimage, Gold Star, RG 92, NAB, **quoted in**, Constance Potter, "World War I Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages, Part 1," The U.S. National Archives & Records Administration, *Prologue Magazine,* Summer 1999, accessed April 11, 2008, http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1999/summer/gold-star-mothers-1.html?template=print.

an integrationist agenda, these men pressured the women to boycott the pilgrimages, arguing that no self-respecting mother or widow would make a mockery of her loved one's ideals and sacrifices by acceding to segregation."[256] Another, the Democratic Party, employed the use of the slogan "Remember our Gold Star Mothers" to influence black voters.[257] These women struggled with personal grief as they confronted the challenges of race obligation. Their sorrow, manipulated and abused to cover a multitude of political agendas, demonstrates the value of women's grief for political purposes.

Other American marginalized women mourning their loss suffered as well, but unfortunately, like their contributions during World War I, teasing information about their lives is required from works where the narrative rotates primarily around the men's activities or perspectives during war. Thomas A. Britten's book, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at Work,* is an example. Britten concentrates on the male service in the military stating "the number of Native American casualties in World War I was high" as the estimation of all Indian servicemen who died in action was around five percent."[258] Susan Applegate Krause in her book, *North American Indians in the Great War*, places the total number of Native American servicemen at around 12,000 and affirms their five percent casualty rate, but cautions this may be low as this number does not include those who died later from wounds or exposure to poison gas in the final

[256] Plant, "The Crowning Insult," 408.
[257] Plant, "The Crowning Insult," 410.
[258] Thomas A. Britten, American *Indians in World War I: At Home and at Work* (New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 139.

causality list.[259] Both of these authors address the loyalty, patriotism, and treatment of other minorities, such as African Americans and Mexican Americans, while stating service and casualty percentages for these communities as well. The research concerning the representation of such women during World War I remains veiled due to lack of information. Their customs surrounding a soldier's death during war is another complexity which deserves study through cultural lens while examining the government's use of their loss for political gain.

Christopher M. Sterba's work, *Good Americans: Italian and Jewish Immigrants During the First World War,* looks at local parishes, such as St. Michaels's in New Haven, New York, which in spite of being largely an immigrant community, "saw no conflict in using this American invention (the service flag with a gold star) to honor all of its soldiers."[260] Sterba records an estimated 300,000 men of Italian descent were in the American Military and their fallen "accounted for perhaps as much as 10 percent of American casualties."[261] The research of World War I immigrant communities involves the treatment of the non-American mothers of American born daughters and sons in the service of the military, especially those mothers from the regions considered enemy countries.

[259] Susan Applegate Krouse, *North American Indians in the Great War* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 2007), 64.
[260] Christopher M. Sterba, *Good Americans: Italian and Jewish Immigrants During the First World War* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 148.
[261] Sterba, *Good*, 150.

X. CONCLUSION

The attempt to generalize the multifaceted, emotionally embraced, and politically charged gold star emblem primarily by focusing on the gold star mother fails to take into account the government's exploitation of women's wartime public mourning or the emblem's turbulent political evolution during World War I. It is an evolution based on political agendas requiring strategies, processes, and networking to expedite particular political outcomes. This evolution begins with death, a military war death enshrined in glory through the image of a state defined war mother. The government needed the death of soldiers perceived as "glorious," eliminating the wearing of black in mourning, and depersonalizing gold star mothers and widows by insisting on the emblem attached to service flags and armbands. Both President Wilson and members of the Woman's Committee, particularly Dr. Anne Howard Shaw, used the armband proposal for their own political agendas, Wilson to shore up public support for the war, and Shaw to gain political support for women's emancipation. Although, the original black armband proposal did not endure the legacy of the gold star did bring about change in the way women publicly mourned a civilian death as opposed to a war related military death, a change that continues today.

XI. EPILOGUE

Although, the government made several unofficial attempts to define a gold star death throughout World War I, it was not until 1947, after the end of World War II, that Congress turned the definition into a written law. Public Law (80-306) clearly defines a gold star death as a direct result of a wound contributed to action during a military conflict.[262] The government produced a symbol of honor for the families of the fallen in the form of a "lapel button consist[ing] of a gold star on a purple circular background, bordered in gold and surrounded by gold laurel leaves."[263] The eligible family members include "widow, widower, mother, father, stepparent, parent through adoption, foster parent in loco parentis, son, daughter, stepchild , child by adoption, brother, sister, half brother, and half sister." The first Gold Star Lapel Buttons, presented to six mothers and

[262] *Gold Star Lapel Button,* Code of Federal Regulations, Title 32 (2006); 425, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2006-title32-vol3/pdf/CFR-2006-title32-vol3-sec578-63.pdf (accessed March 22, 2008). The following is the description of the Gold Star Lapel Button from the document at previous html, "*(k) Gold Star Lapel Button. The Gold Star Lapel Button was established by Act of Congress (Pub. L. 80–306) August 1, 1947, codified at 10 U.S.C. 1126 in order to provide an appropriate identification for widows, widowers, parents, and next of kin of members of the Armed Forces of the United States who lost their lives during World War I, April 6, 1917 to March 3, 1921; World War II, September 8, 1939 to July 25, 1947; any subsequent period of armed hostilities in which the United States was engaged before July 1, 1958 (United Nations action in Korea, June 27, 1950 to July 27, 1954); or who lost their lives after June 30, 1958, while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; or while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent party against an opposing Armed Force; or who lost or lose their lives after March 28, 1973, as a result of an international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation friendly to the United States, recognized as such an attack by the Secretary of Defense; or while serving in a military operation while serving outside the United States (including the commonwealths, territories, and possessions of the United States) as part of a peace-keeping force.*"

[263] *Gold Star Lapel Button*, Code of Federal Regulations; "Gold Star Lapel Button." *Justa U.S. Laws. Lapel Buttons: 32 C.F.R. 578.63*. Title 32: National Defense, 2007, http://law.justia.com/us/cfr/title32/32-3.1.1.6.27.0.15.63.html (accessed March 22, 2008); "First Gold Star Pins Awarded," *New York Times,* May 31, 1948, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (108183590); "Gold Star Lapel Buttons Due," *New York Times,* April 30, 1948, ProQuest Historical Newspapers (108224652).

fathers on May 30, 1948, honored lives lost during World War II.[264] The Gold Star Lapel Button description includes eligible deaths, wars, and military conflicts since April 6, 1917.[265]

Public Law (80-306) accomplished what President Wilson envisioned, the discouragement of public mourning through personal appearance for a military death to one of honor cloaked in a less visible sign. Today, the button sized symbol of honor created by the government, does not draw daily attention to the loss of a military loved one from war, rather its obscurity, in contrast to the black of public mourning, serves to relieve the general public and the government from the uncomfortableness of explaining or of dealing with the reality of such loss. The human cost of military loss due to war is confined to a numerical image found in media reports, government data, research projects, and the dreadful beauty of military cemeteries.


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In addition to the original Gold Star Lapel Button, the government issued the Next of Kin Deceased Personnel Lapel Button in 1977, a gold star on a gold background

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[264] "First Gold Star," May 31, 1948.

[265] *Gold Star Lapel Button*, Code of Federal Regulations; Preston, "Honor and Respect for Fallen Service Members," February 1, 2015.

[266] Betsy Beard, "Gold Star Lapel Button and Next of Kin Deceased," *TAPS, Tragedy Assistance for Survivor's*, https://www.taps.org/articles/15-2/goldstarpins (accessed March 11, 2020); *Lapel Button for Next of Kin of Deceased Personnel*, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 32 (2006): 426, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2006-title32-vol3/pdf/CFR-2006-title32-vol3-sec578-63.pdf (accessed March 22, 2008).

instead of a purple one.[267] Another difference between these button sized symbols is the Next of Kin Deceased Personnel Lapel Button's shape, squared with softened corners created "by four oak springs" grouped around the star.[268] The eligible family members are the same as for the Gold Star Lapel Button, but represent "armed service members who lose their lives while serving on active duty or while assigned in an army Reserve or Army National Guard unit in a drill status," not on the battlefield.[269] This lapel button was retroactive March 29, 1973.[270] These two lapel buttons magnify the conflict between the new and old definitions of battlefields as families, the medical profession, and the government struggle to define what deaths are the result of war or war readiness as the differences between war, global terrorism, and domestic terrorism collide in new and expanding combat zones.

The government's efforts to implement a hierarchy of citizen deaths through the gold star gains an authoritative, yet individual voice, as presidents have utilized the tool of Presidential Proclamations to define the living ultimate patriot worthy of receiving a gold star as they concentrate on the image of a mother. The ceremonial proclamation, "Gold Star Mother's Day," established in1936 by Congress, designated the last Sunday in

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[267] *Lapel Button for Next of Kin of Deceased Personnel,* Code of Federal Regulations; Kenneth O. Preston, "Honor and Respect for Fallen Service Members and Their Families, *"Association of the United States Army*, February 1, 2015, http://www.ausa.org/publications/ausanews/archives/2015/02/Pages/Honorandrespectforfallenservicemembersandtheirfamilies.aspx (accessed June 10, 2015).

[268] *Lapel Button for Next of Kin of Deceased Personnel,* Code of Federal Regulations; Beard, "Gold Star Lapel," *TAPS, Tragedy Assistance for Survivor's*.

[269] *Lapel Button for Next of Kin of Deceased Personnel,* Code of Federal Regulations.

[270] *Lapel Button for Next of Kin of Deceased Personnel,* Code of Federal Regulations; Preston, "Honor and Respect for Fallen Service Members," February 1, 2015.

September as a day of observance to pay honor to the mothers whose children died in war while on active military duty. [271] Many presidents since 1936 combined the recognition of the day with their messages about their administration's rational for past or present military conflicts. [272]

Prior to the internet, newspapers carried the proclamations in part or in their entirety. Each president who chose to write such a proclamation did so to support his administration and his interpretation of current events. Some were short and merely a reminder to the public of the future event and suggested ways to bestow honor upon these women and sometimes they included several paragraphs related to the history and the purpose of the day. Others revealed a need to control an issue or to prepare for a potential military engagement.

On September 28, 2001, seventeen days after the September 11 Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush proclaimed his first Gold Star Mother's Day. Bush started with an acknowledgment of those in the military who bravely served the United States since its founding and he continued with tributes to the more than "1 million" who died in that service . The president referenced a specific war as he wrote, "[i]n the aftermath of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson first use the term 'Gold Star Mother'."[273] The Bush then focused on the mothers who "have endured the loss of a son

[271] Senate joint Resolution 115 established on June 23, 1936.
[272] Not all presidents have issued a proclamation since Congress passed the bill in 1936.
[273] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7474—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2001 Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/217321 (accessed February 18, 2020).

or daughter."[274] He evoked a version of the historical representation of such a mother as he explained how her image signifies "not only the remembrance of a young life sacrificed in service to America, but the pride, dignity, and devotion of one who had first given life to that heroic young American." [275] Bush concluded gold star mothers, "promote patriotism, serve their country, and perpetuate the memories of their lost loved ones."[276] He also listed the expectations placed on these mothers as he stated, "the Nation's Gold Star Mothers still stand as symbols of purpose, perseverance, and grace in the face of personal tragedy."[277]

Bush's 2002 Proclamation informed the nation that one purpose of gold star mothers is to, "help [the country] remember those who [had] been lost by upholding the ideals for which their children gave their lives."[278] He made a blanket statement that all of these mothers supported his "Administration's work to build a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility in our country."[279] Within six months, Bush's "War on Terror" began.

I was ignorant concerning these September Proclamations during my son's deployment in response to the start of the war in Iraq on March 20, 2003. Bush's definition of gold star mothers in September 2003, directly addressed the mothers of the

[274] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7474—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2001.
[275] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7474—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2001.
[276] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7474—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2001.
[277] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7474—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2001.
[278] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7598—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2002 Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/212245 (accessed February 18, 2020).
[279] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7598—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2002.

military troops currently "engaging the enemies of freedom in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and on other fronts in the war against terrorism."[280] The president affirmed the price for such protection is "often personal."[281] By the end of September, American military deaths reached 289, before the next Gold Star Mother's Day there were over 950.[282]

On September 25, 2004, President Bush again proclaimed Gold Star Mother's Day. He referred to the "ultimate sacrifice to defend freedom's blessings" as his description of the gold star mothers included their work of "supporting educational programs that promote patriotism and citizenship, and turning their grief into action." [283] Seventeen days after the publication of his words, I became painfully aware of this group of women, who up to this point, only represented vague images on museum posters or photos in a history book. On the day of my son's death, November 12, 2004, during the Second Battle of Fallujah, my family, one of eleven who lost a loved one that day, heard some version of the words, "we regret to inform you," and before the month's end 137 families arranged military funerals.[284] The American military casualties reached 1,336 by the end of that year.

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[280] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7709—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2003 Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/211018 (accessed February 18, 2020).

[281] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7709—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2003.

[282] U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Casualty Summary by Month and Service, US Casualty Analyst System, (As of March 12, 2020), USA.gov, DCAS February 3, 2020, https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_oif_month.xhtml (accessed March 12, 2020).

[283] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7821—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2004 Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/211395 (accessed February 2018, 2020).

[284] CNN World – U.S. and Coalition Casualties – Iraq, Select Year – 2004, http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/forces/casualties/2004.11.html (accessed March 12, 2020); U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Casualty Summary by Month and Service.

In September of 2005, as the country entered the second year of the Iraq War with over 1,800 military casualties, Bush linked the War in Iraq to a century of military history in his Gold Star Mother's Day proclamation.[285] He referenced the current war as he stated, "from the trenches of World War I to the beaches of Normandy, from Korea to Vietnam, from Afghanistan to Iraq, many courageous members of our military have given their lives so that Americans could live in freedom and security." [286] The president again described the gold star mother as he wrote, "We commend these proud women for their compassion, commitment, and patriotism, and our Nation will always honor them for their sacrifice and service."[287]

As the month of September 2007 drew near the total deaths of the United States forces reached 3,739.[288] The previous two years, plagued by protests from mothers and families of casualties or military service personnel in Iraq, included a notable campaign of protest by Cindy Sheehan, the mother US Army Specialist Casey Sheehan, killed in action on April 4, 2004. As the Iraq War became more unpopular vocal military mothers, many who were gold star mothers and their families, joined forces with veterans and civilians to demonstrate and question Bush's policies about Iraq. His message for Gold Star Mother's Day that year separated out "desirable" gold star mothers as he added more explicit characteristics to the status than the original definition of suffering a loss.

[285] U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Casualty Summary by Month and Service.
[286] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7935—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2005 Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/211278 (accessed February 18, 2020).
[287] George W. Bush, Proclamation 7935—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2005.
[288] U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Casualty Summary by Month and Service.

Bush described his vision of gold star mothers in his 2007 Proclamation as "remarkable patriots who serve their communities by demonstrating good citizenship, providing support and services to our troops and veterans, and helping comfort the families whose loved ones have made the ultimate sacrifice."[289] His vision of characteristics defined a gold star mother's performance of appropriate public grief and it did not include protesting the loss of a military daughter or son in war.

The government's rhetoric of incorporating requirements for the socially acceptable gold star mother inspired me to search for the origins of this icon born from the World War I legacy of the gold star on a black armband. I pondered the words patriot, community service, citizenship, and comfort in the light of women who mourned the fallen during American wars. Such examination forces me to own my part in the preservation of a citizen hierarchy of death as I consider my role of public mourning in the loss of a son due to war.

[289] George W. Bush, Proclamation 8179–Gold Star Mother's Day, 2007 Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/276601(accessed March 12, 2020).

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